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FAMOUS CRIMES

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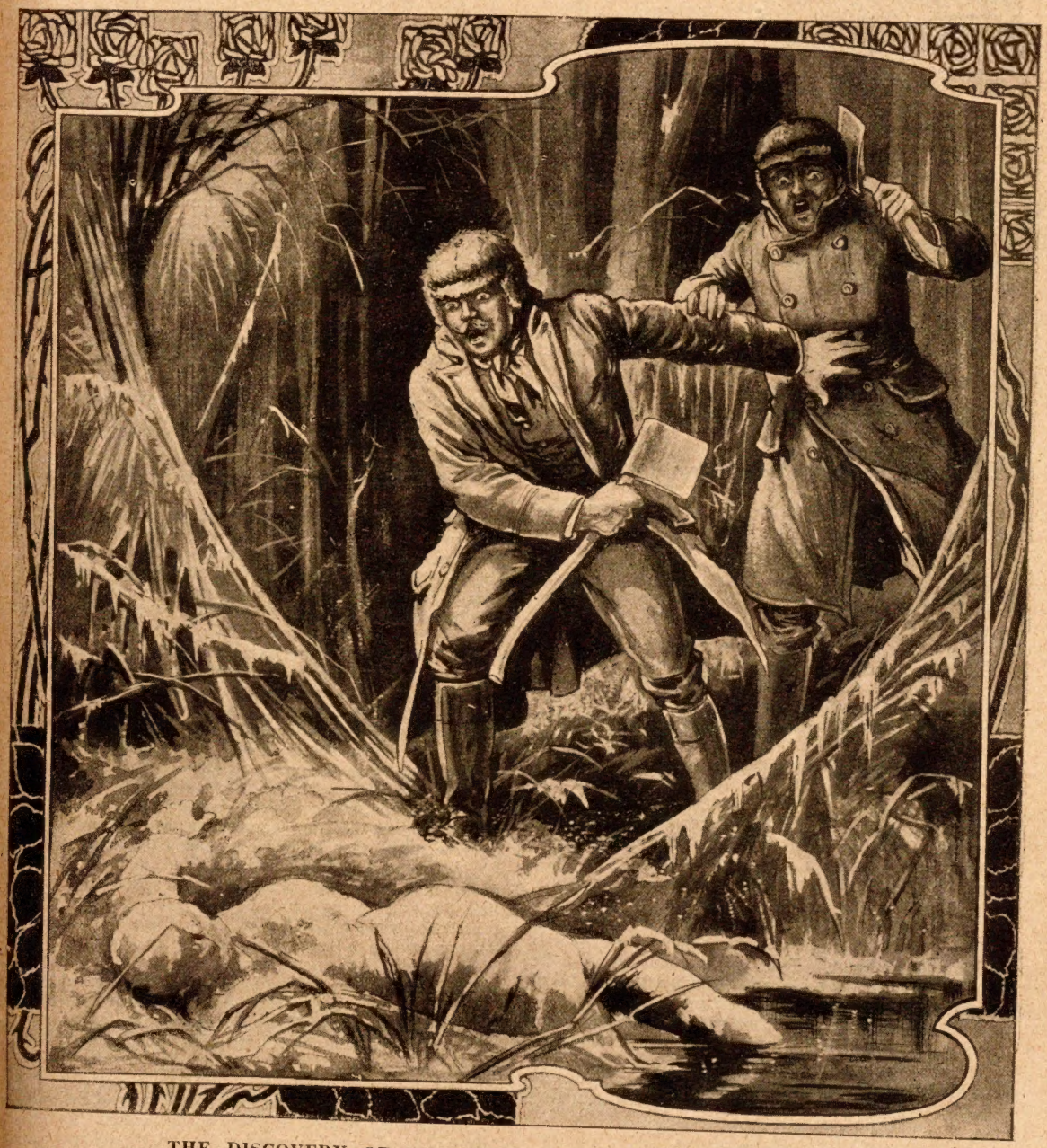


THE DISCOVERY OF THE MURDER IN DEAD MAN'S SWAMP.

Vol. V.—No. 62.

The Slaying of Mr. F. C. Benwell by Reginald Birchall.

"Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Macbeth," Act V., Scene 2.

MANY circumstances combined to make the crime of which we are about to write a memorable one. Its sensational features excited the interest and aroused the curiosity of two continents. It was one difficult to unravel, and the culprit nearly, but not quite, succeeded in preserving his own safety. The crime, like the criminal, was an original one, or at least the murderer adopted original methods. He was an educated and astute man, lacking scruples and wanting money. He therefore began to scheme out some novel method of obtaining the needful cash, and a way presented itself to him.

Incidentally, the way meant murder, but that fact did not disturb the equanimity of Reginald Birchall, who felt that conscience was a luxury which only the very rich could afford! His victim found, he killed him. Unfortunately for him, he was discovered. That was his bad luck. Nothing more!

That this man contemplated adding other victims to the one, nobody can doubt who has studied the case in its entirety. Had the first venture resulted—as his prudence and foresight entitled him to hope—successfully, he would undoubtedly have elaborated the scheme, and many well-to-do young gentlemen from England might have joined the enterprising Mr. Birchall, and then vanished.

But Nemesis intervened, and the pretty scheme was spoilt. If history is to be credited, some such plan filled the head of the notorious Thurtell—hanged 1824—who actually rented a house in London where murder was to be carried out on a grand scale, and all sorts of dreadful contrivances of death were planned and prepared.

With one single exception, no colonial crime has ever excited such widespread interest as the Birchall-Benwell tragedy. The exception was the case of that extraordinary man, Frederick Deeming, whose exploits both at home and abroad occasioned such excitement a couple of years after Birchall had paid the penalty of his misdeeds.

And now to commence our story.

On the 21st of February, 1890, two woodmen, named Eldridge, were passing through a morass known as Dead Man's Swamp, in a lonely part of the forest at Princeton, Ontario, Canada, when they came across the body of a man who had undoubtedly been murdered, and the police inquiries which the discovery set on foot resulted in the unmasking of one of the darkest and most diabolical plots ever chronicled in British America.

The body was found to be that of a Mr. F. C. Benwell, a young Englishman, who had been a cabin passenger on the White Star steamer "Britannic," which arrived at New York on February 13th, 1890. A cigar-case bearing the name of the deceased was found in the pocket, also a pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses, without any identifying mark. Two men, fellow-passengers of the deceased, were quickly arrested on suspicion. Their names were Pelley and Bushell, but the latter, it was found, was evidently travelling under an alias, as a year before he had visited Niagara Falls with his wife under the name of Somerset. The two accused men were brought before the magistrates on the 5th of March, it having been discovered in the meantime that "Bushell's" real name was Reginald Birchall. His fellow-prisoner, Mr. Douglas Raymond Pelley, a young Englishman, made a statement in court on the above day, which indicated that there had been a deep plot concocted in England to lure the unsuspecting young man to journey to Canada in order to engage in a large and lucrative business. This business was supposed to be conducted by Birchall and a confederate. There seems to have been, at that time, a sort of secret society of murderers formed, of which Birchall was, it was claimed, one of the agents. Pelley asserted that he was offered all sorts of inducements, and that the business was represented as being that of a large produce commission house which controlled all the business of the western part of Canada. He also declared that he was quite blinded by the business prospects offered him, and he gave Birchall about £200. He said he could plainly see how he had been gulled, and considered himself a lucky man that he did not meet the fate of Benwell, as he could recall two or three times when he had been taken to various places where a man could easily have been killed and no one be the wiser, but something evidently intercepted the plans for the time being, and he escaped. Thus Pelley related an incident how Birchall had enticed him down a stairway leading to the edge of the Niagara River; opposite Wesley Park. A man coming up at the time no doubt prevented him from being murdered. On another occasion while on the suspension bridge he might easily have been shoved into the seething rapids below. Pelley believed that it was Birchall's intention to kill him first, and then Benwell; but when Pelley left for New York, Birchall decided on Benwell's doom.

He said his full name was Douglas Raymond Pelley, of Walden Place, Saffron Walden, a spot which has been latterly brought into prominence by the Moat Farm murder. He was at that time twenty-five years of age, his father being the Rev. R. P. Pelley, vicar of Saffron Walden. Pelley

added that there had been some correspondence between his father and Birchall, and the final articles were signed at Bambridge, Maberley Road, Upper Norwood, London, which was the home of Mr. David Stephenson, father of Mrs. Birchall.

The only information Birchall gave was: "I am twenty-five years of age, and was born at Church, Lancashire. I have no particular business, and I have no occupation. I am married. I have a college education, and belong to the Church of England." It was discovered that Birchall was known at Woodstock, Ontario, having gone there from England in the autumn of the year 1889, as it was supposed to learn farming. He boarded in town with his wife, and lived on the best during his stay there. He was in receipt of large sums of money sent to him as the agent of an English firm. During the winter he made many acquaintances among the young men of the town, passing himself off as the son of Lord Somerset, and spent money very freely on himself, his wife, and his companions. But these things had to come to an end, and on May the 14th, 1889, he received the last of his money from England, which was supposed to have come direct from his father. This was an instalment of about £150. The next day he and his wife decamped from Niagara, leaving his livery, wine, and some other bills unpaid.

When Birchall and Pelley were first arraigned, Detective Murray said there was no doubt that Benwell was murdered on the 17th of February, and that he would bring proof that Birchall was seen to enter a train at Eastwood, near the scene of the murder, with his trousers rolled up and his clothing covered with mud, on the afternoon of that day.

On the 7th of March, Birchall was again arraigned, when George Hay, a brakesman on the Grand Trunk Railway, positively swore that he saw the prisoner on February 17 at Eastwood Station, near the scene of the murder. His trousers were turned up, and his boots covered with mud. Birchall was remanded to the Welland Gaol for seven days. Mrs. Birchall was then arrested, and the magistrate informed her that he had been instructed by the Attorney-General of Ontario to remand her for seven days. A consultation was held, and she was allowed to remain at Niagara Falls until morning, under police surveillance, to enable counsel to interview the Attorney-General and see if bail could be arranged. The spectators loudly applauded Mrs. Birchall's counsel. She was looked on by the public as an innocent woman who had been duped into a marriage by a designing scoundrel. There were a few hisses in court when Detective Murray was contending for a remand without bail.

At the inquest held on the body, the testimony taken was calculated to complete the chain that had been forged by the police and brought out at the examination at Niagara Falls. It was proved that Benwell and Birchall left Buffalo at six o'clock on the morning of February 17 for the purpose of visiting Birchall's fictitious farm.

George Hay, the witness already mentioned, repeated his evidence given at the magisterial proceedings, and in addition said that the time that Birchall entered the train on February 17 was a quarter to four.

Poole, another guard, swore that the two young men left his train at Eastwood at fourteen minutes after eleven o'clock on the above date. They entered the train at Hamilton. A piece of baggage and a curious-looking gun case was taken from the train at Eastwood that morning.

John Crosbie, a farmer, deposed to having met the deceased and the prisoner on February 17, about four miles from the scene of the murder. He was not able to identify a photograph of deceased, though he said it had "the general shape of the man who wore the eye-glasses."

Alice Smith swore that she met "Lord Somerset" on the afternoon of February 17, about three o'clock, at Eastwood Station. She knew him as Lord Somerset the previous year, and had met him at Woodstock and at her grandfather's. He bought a ticket for Hamilton.

Thomas Dunn, stationmaster at Eastwood, testified to having sold a ticket for Hamilton to a man with a dark moustache. His boots were muddy, and his trousers rolled up. He got into an accommodation train for Hamilton.

Alfred Hayward, of Eastwood, saw two men coming past the hill on the above date between eleven and twelve o'clock. He identified the coat found on Mr. Benwell as having been worn by one of the men. The other man wore a short coat, but not an overcoat.

Mrs. Birchall was completely prostrated, and the coroner's verdict, implicating her as an accessory after the crime, was withheld from her, as it was believed it would seriously undermine her health.

Birchall himself was as nonchalant in his cell as if in a drawing-room. As to the prisoner Pelley, nobody after the first police inquiry suspected him of complicity in the crime, but he was congratulated on having escaped a fate like Benwell's.

So completely was the chain of evidence forged (circumstantial, it is true, but overwhelming) which encompassed Birchall, that the police expressed the belief that he had deliberately made up his mind to get rid of both Pelley and his wife as soon as he discovered that they suspected him of having made away with Benwell.

Reginald Birchall.
From a drawing made on his arrest.

There was a good deal of talk about the existence of an international plot to lure young Englishmen to their death by bogus advertisements of inviting prospects in Canada, and there were undoubtedly good grounds upon which to base such a supposition, though in the particular case under notice Birchall, as I have said before, seems to have worked alone. He had no confederates, though it was at first suspected that his wife was implicated, but she was afterwards proved entirely ignorant of the matter. I may say that she was never put in prison, but kept in a boarding-house at Niagara Falls, as her physician declared that to put her in gaol at that time would be to wreck her health and perhaps deprive her of her reason. The only gleam of brightness she showed for a couple of weeks after the revelation of her husband's iniquity was when she was informed that her father had sailed from England for America. The change was only momentary, however, and she soon relapsed into a prostrate condition.

Meanwhile, Birchall was taking things very calmly in his dirty quarters at Welland Gaol. He never opened his mouth about his case, nor did he ever appear to be the

victim to sentiment or remorse. He never inquired for his wife, and he had apparently forgotten her existence. When he had been in prison about seventeen days, he began to show symptoms of insanity, which was attributed to excessive cigarette smoking. He muttered to himself and traced imaginary characters in space with his fingers.

Detective Murray found a bogus bank book on Birchall, purporting to be issued by the Paris Banking Company, Limited, of London, and showing a fictitious balance of £4,000. The last deposit entry was dated December 26, 1888. On the opposite, or debit side, was the entry, "Remitted to Imperial Bank of Canada surplus by bonds Land Company, representing £4,000 stock at 4 per cent."

At the preliminary investigation which was resumed at Woodstock on Wednesday, March 12, 1890, Mr. Evey, counsel for Mrs. Birchall, asked the magistrate to discharge her absolutely, as there was no offence proved against her. The magistrate, however, thought that under all the circumstances it would be safer to remand her for eight days. If at the end of that time no evidence was produced against her, he should send her to Woodstock or discharge her, as the circumstances demanded. Mrs. Birchall was then

Mrs. Birchall.
From a photograph taken in Canada.

taken out of the courtroom. She appreciated this delicacy on the part of the authorities, as it saved her from meeting her husband. Birchall was then brought in. He smiled, and seemed to look upon the proceedings as a huge farce. The testimony taken was what I have already told, the one new and important feature being the evidence of James Duffy, a newsboy, who positively swore to having met Birchall on the train on his return from the scene of the murder. He had chatted with Birchall, sat beside him, and smoked a cigar he gave him. The lad's words told on Birchall, who averted his eyes and turned his face away when the lad, taking a long look at him, said, "I have no doubt that that is the man."

On being asked at the conclusion if he had anything to say, Birchall replied, "I have nothing to say at the present time." The magistrate then committed him to the common gaol at Woodstock, until he should "be tried or released on bail, as the case might be." Birchall was then taken to Clifton Gaol.

The writer saw him for a few moments in his cell, and though he refused to talk about his case he conversed easily on various subjects. He told me his father was the Rev. Joseph Birchall, who died in 1878. He also had a brother, he said, who was a clergyman in Gloucestershire, and a sister who lived near Liverpool, and he added that he had written letters to these relatives during his confinement in Welland Gaol.

Birchall was taken from Niagara Falls to Woodstock Gaol, and before being removed was allowed to see and converse with his wife. He told her that he had about £60 left, and said she could have part if she liked. He also said that she could have a divorce from him if she wished it. "I will make no trouble about it," he said, and here he showed the first emotion since his arrest, "you can separate from me if you wish." The poor wife sobbed, and said she would not desert him, and sank down exhausted as he was led away.

On Monday, March 24, Mr. David Stephenson and Mrs. West Jones, the father and sister of Mrs. Birchall, arrived at Niagara Falls at 11 p.m., and they all remained closeted together till 2 the following morning.

An interesting discovery was made on Tuesday, April 16, which seemed likely to still further complicate the case.

On the register of the Commercial Hotel, Brantford, Ontario, was found the name of F. C. Benwell, which was supposed to have been placed there by Birchall's victim. It was afterwards learned that it was written by another young Englishman, who left for the United States a few weeks before the Princeton tragedy, and who, curiously enough, bore exactly the same patronymic as Birchall's friend. As Birchall all along had averred that the supposed murdered Benwell was still alive, it was considered probable that an attempt would be made to identify the murdered man as the one who registered at the hotel.

The trial of Birchall commenced at Woodstock Courthouse, before Mr. Justice McMahon, on Monday, September 22, 1890, and the first development of the plan of the prosecution was that the Crown was particular in fixing the exact time when the murder was committed, in order to show that it was done between the time the train arrived which took Birchall and Benwell to Eastwood, and the time the train returned to Niagara which bore Birchall away, and also to show that Benwell was killed on the spot where his body was found.

Patrick Maguire was called to prove that he passed the spot at eleven o'clock on the day of the murder, and the body was not there then. The brothers Eldridge testified to finding the body, and said no man could have carried it to where it was found. Mr. Blackstock, for the defence, tried to upset this on cross-examination, endeavouring to show that Mr. Benwell might have been murdered elsewhere, and brought there by the murderers.

Constable Watson described the position of the body, and told slowly, but graphically, how the overcoat and vest were ripped up the back and the collars torn off; how a button and a piece of the shirt clung to it, and how the hat, with the sweatband turned out, lay a dozen feet away. He also said that when summoned by the Eldridge brothers to the swamp, he noticed that one foot of the dead man was embedded in a crust of ice. He broke this and released the foot. He noticed that while the surface of the ice was clear of bloodstains, there were marks of blood beneath the surface. This showed that the spot where the body was found was the one on which Benwell was murdered.

Dr. Taylor, of Princeton, testified to the condition of the clothing, and as to one of the murdered man's arms being in an upright position. There were powder marks on the ear and the side of the face, and bullet holes in the back of the head—one on the left side, level with the ear, and another about half an inch to the right of the centre at the base of the skull. He said that the bullet hole in the collar of the overcoat would correspond with the hole on the base of the skull. There was evidence of discolouration slightly above the groin on the left side, and also near the pit of the stomach. This might have taken place shortly before or after death, and might have been caused by a fall. One of the bullets passed into the lower lobe of the brain, upwards and forwards, resting near the right temple. The other passed through the cerebral membrane. Dr. Wilford, who

made the post-mortem examination of Benwell's body, gave evidence as to the cause of death. He found two bullets in deceased's brain. The first was found at the base of the brain, and must have caused instantaneous death, as the heart's action was arrested in mid-throb. The second bullet was towards the side of the head. Only a portion of the hair was singed on the back of the head, the rest being protected by the coat collar. (The coat was here produced, showing a hole through the collar.)

The body was placed on the spot where it was discovered immediately after death, this being shown by the indentions in the muscles, made by twigs. The body was covered with snow, and frozen in ice, during the heavy storm on the night of Monday, the 17th of February. After that date there were only some very slight falls of snow until the remains were found.

Dr. Staples corroborated this evidence, and some meteorological officers gave evidence as to the state of the weather at the time of the murder, their statements being chiefly of a technical nature. They showed that there was a heavy fall of snow on the night in question.

Officers at Niagara proved that no one named Birchall or Somerset ever owned a farm in the vicinity. The cashier of the Niagara Bank said that Birchall deposited 154 dollars in sovereigns and notes, and at the same time gave his signature. He said that he was buying horses for the British Army. Witness identified Birchall's signature on various letters and cheques. Telegraph agents were then examined regarding telegrams sent from the Niagara Falls office.

On Thursday, September 25, the fourth day of the trial, the interest in the case had increased to such an extent that the constables were utterly powerless in the hands of the crowd, which reached from the main street, one hundred feet away, into the court, and the witnesses found it necessary to enter by main force. One of the most extraordinary features in connection with the courtroom was its telephone arrangements. Women of many leading families had become intensely interested in the case, and the courtroom was crowded by them as well as by men. Those who were unable to gain admittance gathered in the neighbouring hotels and actually sat there by the hour to hear the trial by telephone, an arrangement which, for a fine eye to business, quite outdid the Yankees. The telephone transmittors that hung over the heads of counsel and his lordship were worked all day. The wires were run to a hotel where the receivers were let at 25 cents (1s.) per hour. There were also four wires in private rooms for ladies, and all of them were busy during the day.

The Crown endeavoured to prove, first, that Benwell and Birchall were seen near where the body was found; second, that Benwell was murdered where his body was found, hence by Birchall. Mr. Blackstock, Birchall's counsel, tried to prove that not only were the two men not there, but, even granting Birchall had been there on that day, that Benwell was not murdered then and there, but that the body was dragged there, as evidenced by the marks of dragging on the boot heels. He, moreover, tried to show that the fatal shot was not fired at close range, but from a distance, and that after the two men entered the swamp, and had gone a considerable distance, they quarrelled and separated, Birchall returning to the station and Benwell going on, and that after Benwell had gone some distance he met his death. How Mr. Blackstock was going to manage to prove all this was a puzzle that was not apparent at this stage of the trial.

On the fourth day of the trial, Birchall's trip to Niagara with Benwell, and his return alone, formed the chief subject of the day's evidence. The prosecution, tracing Birchall's journey from the Falls to the swamp where Benwell's body was found, called as a first witness a man named Poole, the conductor of the train by which the prisoner travelled. His evidence I have already given.

The evidence of two ladies was next taken, the Misses Choat and Lockhart, who were passengers in the same train. Both testified to having seen the two men. Miss Choat, moreover, said she heard one of the men, who, from her description, must have been Benwell, say to his companion, "I was offered five hundred." Later on she heard Birchall say, "It will be night before we get there."

Heywood, a miller at Eastwood, swore that he saw Birchall, accompanied by a man who was a stranger to him, pass his place on the morning of February 17. In identifying Birchall, he (witness) declared that he knew prisoner when he was at Woodstock, where he passed under the name of Somerset.

The ticket agent of the Grand Trunk Railway proved the sale of two tickets to Eastwood on the day of the murder, and the prisoner, who from the beginning of the trial had appeared almost indifferent to the proceedings, here began to manifest strong interest, and as one witness after another was called by the Crown to show that he accompanied the murdered man to the swamp where he met his death, Birchall evinced much excitement. Several persons testified to having met a man resembling prisoner on his way to the swamp in company with another man. Evidence was also given as to tracks of two men across fields leading to the scene of the tragedy. Mr. Crosby, a farmer, swore

The murdered man.
From a photograph taken by the police.

positively to having seen Benwell and Birchall on the road to the swamp. He identified the prisoner, and stated that the body buried at Princeton was that of Birchall's companion. Under cross-examination, the witness fainted, but his evidence was not shaken.

Several men who had been shooting round the pond, 300 yards from where the body was found, were next examined, and they swore that they heard shots on February 17, giving the hour of the day which corresponded with the Crown's theory as regards the time at which the murder was committed. The shots succeeded each other at short intervals, and sounded as if fired from a rifle or pistol.

The court adjourned after this evidence, and on the following day, Friday, a somewhat touching incident occurred. As Birchall was being driven from the gaol to the courthouse, Mrs. Birchall was watching for him from the window, and affectionate salutations were exchanged between husband and wife. When the prisoner entered the dock it was observed that he looked pale and careworn, as if he had passed a sleepless night.

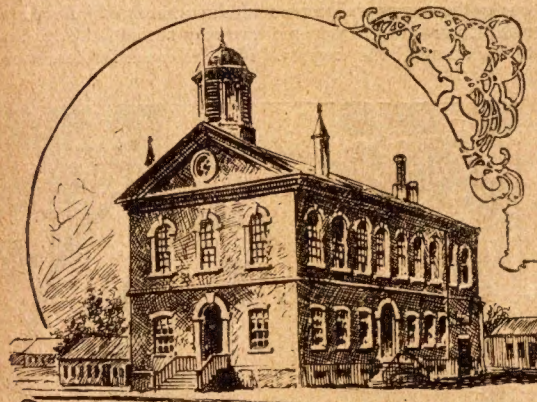
Resuming the case for the prosecution, the Crown continued to bring forward evidence of Birchall's return to Eastwood Station alone, after his visit to the swamp in company with the murdered man. A Miss Cromwell and a Miss

Swazie both identified prisoner as the man they had seen at Eastwood Railway Station buying a ticket for Hamilton.

Heyward, the station porter, corroborated this evidence, and the testimony of the guard of the train who saw Birchall on his way back to Falls Station, closed the case for the Crown.

The first witness called for the defence was a German farmer named John Rabb, who lived half-a-mile from the scene of the tragedy. He testified that he heard two shots fired on Tuesday night, February the 18th. He knew it was Tuesday evening by there being a thunderstorm that night. His evidence on this point conflicted with that of the officers of the Weather Bureau, who said that it was Wednesday night that the storm in question took place. Rabb said he saw two men walk out of the swamp near the spot where Benwell's body was found in the evening.

Mrs. Schultz, who lived close to Rabb's farm, also swore



WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL. WHERE THE TRIAL WAS HELD.

to having heard shots from the direction of the swamp, but made the same error as the previous witness in calculating the date.

Dr. Mearns was the next witness, and he swore that the bruises on the body of the murdered man, as described, must have been caused prior to death. He also disagreed with the medical testimony on behalf of the Crown as to the time when rigor mortis set in, which was placed by Dr. Taylor, who conducted the post-mortem examination on Benwell's body, at two or three hours after death, within which time the remains must have been placed where they were afterwards found.

This evidence was in support of a theory which the defence endeavoured to set up, that Benwell was killed in a house of ill-fame about four miles from the swamp, and that the body was carried to the spot where it was discovered.

Dr. Richardson, anatomist of the Faculty of Toronto University, was also called, and his evidence coincided with that of Dr. Mearns. Both witnesses were submitted to a searching cross-examination by counsel for the Crown, who quoted authorities to show that these experts were wrong. Their evidence was much shaken, and was only considered to have afforded another instance of how doctors disagree.

The concluding evidence for the defence was that of Norman McQueen, a clerk, who swore that he saw Birchall in Woodstock on February 17.

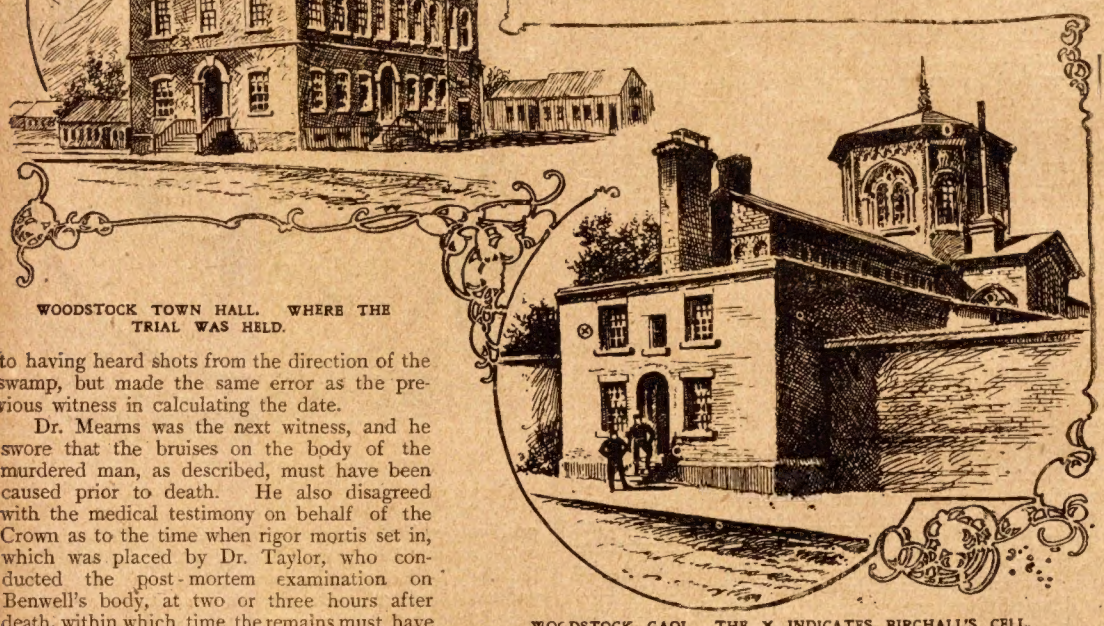
The defence closed on Saturday at 12.15, but counsel asked for privilege to examine witnesses on the following Monday morning. The announcement of the defence that their case was closed caused quite a sensation in the court. The hopes of Birchall and his counsel were considerably revived by the evidence of McQueen, as showing the difficulty of positively identifying the prisoner. Birchall himself appeared visibly relieved, and laughed and chatted freely with the members of the Press at the conclusion of the day's proceedings, as he stood in the dock awaiting his removal to gaol. His gaoler told the writer that Birchall felt "very blue" the previous night, and did not sleep, but he was quite changed on this day (Saturday), and was quite confident of being acquitted.

On Monday, September 29, great excitement prevailed at the resumption of the hearing of Birchall's trial. He was placed in the dock shortly after nine o'clock.

Several more witnesses were called for the defence, including a messenger boy at Niagara Falls, who testified to having delivered a message to Birchall informing him that a letter and message for him were lying at Stafford House, the message in question being a telegram which the prisoner told Pelley was from Benwell asking for his trunks to be forwarded to New York.

A farmer living near Princeton was also called. He deposed that on the night of the murder a man had called at his house acting strangely, and he had refused him admission. The man said it was a pity that some more were not put out on the road. This finally closed the case for the defence.

Mr. Blackstock began his address to the jury at ten o'clock. The main portion of his address was devoted to



WOODSTOCK GAOL. THE X INDICATES BIRCHALL'S CELL.

attacking the evidence of the witnesses who testified that they had seen two men on their way to the swamp, and had afterwards perceived Birchall returning alone.

After an eloquent speech, lasting five hours and twenty minutes, Mr. Blackstock, in his closing words, submitted that not one iota of the evidence directly connected the prisoner with the crime, and he asked for an acquittal.

Mrs. Birchall, who was in court, was much affected by counsel's address, but the prisoner himself showed no sign of emotion. At half-past three Mr. Osler, Q.C., commenced his reply on behalf of the prosecution. He began by describing the formation of a plot in England between Birchall and a man named Mellens, to dupe pupil farmers, and then followed on the journey of the party to America, and subsequently to Niagara Falls. He also recalled to the minds of the jury many important points to which the other side had thought it unwise to refer.

The learned judge having summed up, the jury retired

at fifty-three minutes past nine in the evening, and were waiting with their verdict when the judge returned into court at twenty-five minutes past eleven p.m.

At a quarter to twelve the prisoner was brought into court. He was pale and nervous, and almost fell upon the floor from weakness, and he was indeed a pitiable sight when he reached the dock. He recovered himself, however, but his face evidenced that he had given up all hope. When the prisoner had seated himself in the box, the clerk of the court asked the foreman of the jury the usual question as to whether they had agreed upon their verdict. The foreman rose and replied, "We find the prisoner guilty."

The judge then said, "Stand up, John Reginald Birchall. What have you to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

The prisoner thereupon stood up and said, "Nothing, except that I am not guilty of the crime.

The judge then continued as follows: "I must concur with the jury that you conceived the murder of a fine young man, destined to live for many years, in order that you might receive a miserable reward asked in the draft from England as the price of blood. It is sad that a young man of education should have been guilty of such a crime after a short period of marriage, and connected, as you are, with an estimable family, upon whom you have brought disgrace. I can hold out no hope of a commutation of the sentence, and I urge upon you to change your heart in the short time that you are left on earth. The sentence of the court is that you be taken back to gaol and hanged in the yard between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Friday, November 14."

The prisoner did not betray the slightest emotion, and he was taken back to prison and placed in a cell.

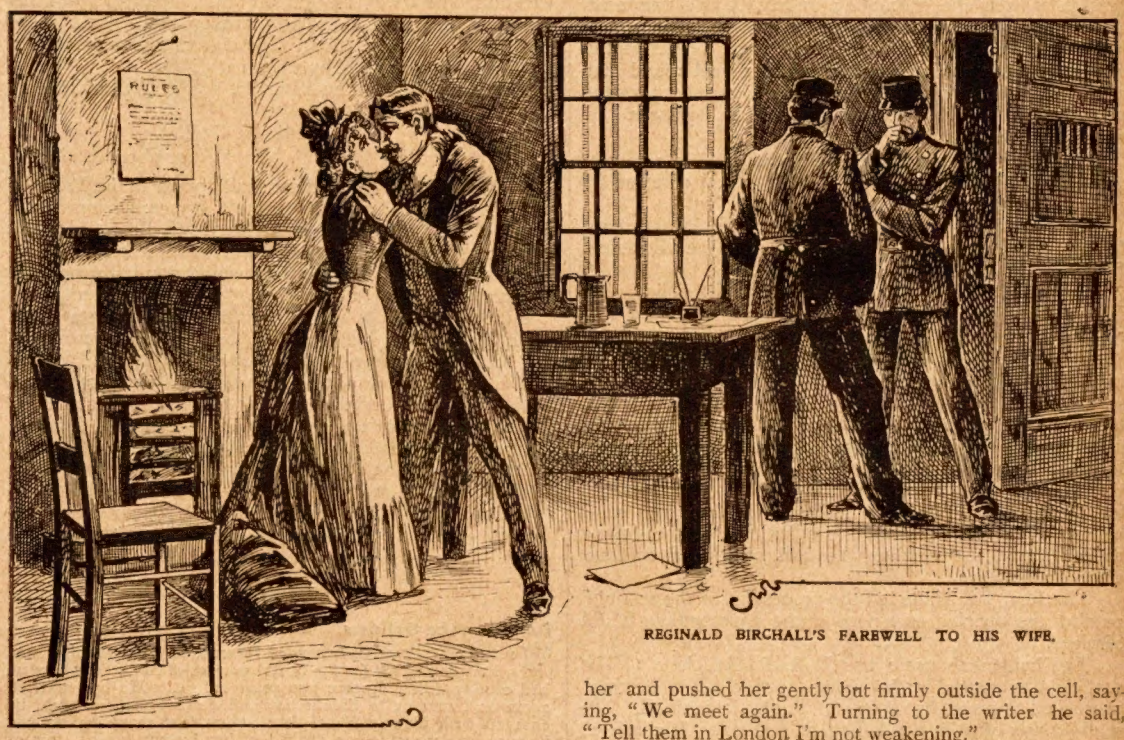
Mrs. Birchall was completely prostrated for a time, and her life despaired of, but she recovered eventually, and then set about the task of preparing a petition for a commutation of her husband's sentence. On Tuesday, November 4, she presented this petition at Ottawa to Sir John Thompson, Minister of Justice. It was signed by 600 persons.

Mrs. Birchall had a private interview with Sir John, and it was said to have been of a most painful character. Sir John was deeply affected, but would make no promises.

Whilst awaiting execution, Birchall wrote an autobiography, in which he told of his life, his trial, and his experiences. It was copiously illustrated by the author, and contained many incidents of his life at school and at Oxford, where he was a student at Lincoln College. It was published in the "New York Herald," the opening chapter appearing on Thursday, November 6, 1890.

On Sunday, November 9, Mrs. Birchall was informed that her petition had not been successful, and on hearing this she at once went to the gaol with her sister and told her husband the sad news. He simply said, "I guess I have got to go, dear." The scene was extremely touching, and even the guards were moved by the women's grief. Birchall, however, was quite composed.

On Thursday, November the 13th, the last meeting took place between Birchall and his wife. They spent six hours together in the early part of the night, and it was ten o'clock when she left him. The parting was most affecting. "Reggie," she said, "you are not going to leave me; I will go with you." Lifting his wife in his arms Birchall kissed her and pushed her gently but firmly outside the cell, saying, "We meet again." Turning to the writer he said, "Tell them in London I'm not weakening."



REGINALD BIRCHALL'S FAREWELL TO HIS WIFE.

Mrs. Birchall wept as if her heart would break and, after a long embrace and farewell kisses, which ended as just described, she was led down the winding stairs from Birchall's cell by the culprit's old college chum, Leetham, to a carriage in waiting outside. As she went on her sad way to the gates of the prison, she passed under the window of the cell where her husband was confined, and, looking up at the faint glimmer of light stealing through the bars, she cried out in agonised tones, "Reggie, Reggie, my love, good-bye, my darling!" She was hurried away and driven to the hotel, where she became hysterical. A doctor was called to her assistance, and he administered a sleeping potion, under the influence of which she remained until all was over.

At six o'clock on the morning of November 14 a warder entered Birchall's cell with the doomed man's breakfast, which consisted of poached eggs, a dish of tinned peaches, some tinned blackberries, bread and coffee. Birchall watched the laying of the table with considerable interest, and partook with great appetite of the dainties provided for him. He chatted freely during the meal, and cracked jokes with his attendants. When Sheriff Parry entered the

cell, however, he became more serious. The warrant of execution was read out to him, and he grew visibly pale, and for the first time seemed to lose his nerve, stretched out his hand, which was trembling a good deal, to his friend Leetham, and said tremulously, "Take hold of my hand, old man." Then for a few moments he lapsed into silence. He sat down on the chair by the side of his table, and those present watched him, feeling sorry in their hearts for a man who had so bravely stood the terrible ordeal of his trial; but, much as their admiration was provoked by the memory of what he had undergone in the past, what was to come was not only a surprise, but it showed that Birchall was indeed true grit.

Again he stood erect, and, facing the sheriff, said, without a tremor in his voice, "Can't you hurry this thing up? Why need I wait through these ghastly hours until two o'clock? I am ready. Can't you help me?"

And here we may explain that the sheriff had done what was perhaps an injudicious thing. He had been pestered by friends and business acquaintances for tickets of admission to view the execution; in fact, it was rumoured that something in the way of an improvised grand stand, with numbered seats, had been erected, and, to the disgust of every right-minded person, the whisper went round that many of the tickets to view the ghastly ceremony might possibly be used by women—it would be a disgrace to the sex to call them ladies.

Certain newspapers had hinted at the possible scandals, and the sheriff had qualms as to the natural outcome of such a dereliction on his part.

He turned to the other officials, and a hurried conference was held. Then, wheeling round, he addressed Birchall.

"Reginald," he said, "I think we might oblige you. It is perhaps the last thing you could ask us, and I will chance the racket."

However, it transpired, on inquiry, that the executioner had left the gaol for the purpose of obtaining a meal; so all the warders who could be spared were despatched to seek for him and to give the intimation to the newspaper men of the intending expediting of the proceedings. In a very short time everything was ready, the sheriff marshalled those present into order, and the procession started for the scaffold. His friend, Leetham, held Birchall's hand by way of support, and on the other side of the culprit walked Parry, the warder, who had been in attendance since his sentence.

The Rev. Mr. Wade led the procession to the scaffold, reading the opening sentences of the Episcopalian burial service.

The hangman's name was J. R. R. Radcleve. The scaffold was erected in the western yard, and the hangman proceeded to place the ropes and weights in position. The scaffold was of a kind unknown in England. It consisted of two uprights of 17 feet, planted 3 feet in the ground and 7 feet apart, with a long crossbar overhead. There was no platform, and consequently no trap door, the doomed man standing on his mother earth. The rope was passed through a hole in the centre of the crossbar between the uprights, and then over a pulley along to an extending arm of the crossbar, where it passed over another pulley, and down through a hole in the arm, below which it was hooked to a weight of 350 lbs. This was kept suspended close to the arm of the crossbar, so that when the executioner jerked a small rope the weight fell, dragging with it about ten feet of the slack rope, with the noose at the end.

The condemned man halted in front of the gallows while the service was being read, and then at a given signal took his place on the ground beneath the rope. The hangman pinioned the convict's feet, and adjusted the noose on his neck. Birchall then shook hands with Mr. Wade and kissed him on both cheeks. After shaking hands with the hangman, he whispered, "Good-bye," as the cap was being adjusted. As the chaplain was reciting the closing words of the Lord's Prayer, the executioner pulled a rope which allowed the heavy weight to drop with a dull thud, and Birchall's body shot into the air about ten feet by the impetus of its fall. It dropped again several feet with a dreadful jerk, and swayed fearfully to and fro.

It was fully expected that his neck would be immediately broken by the shock, but the executioner had apparently made some miscalculation, for death was actually caused by strangulation. The sight was a very painful and unexpected one, and quite unnerved those who witnessed it. The legs were drawn up, and then straightened out several times, and the hands, which were free, clenched and unclenched convulsively. The cap had been only half pulled over Birchall's face by the hangman, and his features could be seen working horribly in his agony. Men turned their heads away, and the executioner, fearing that the convict might prolong his struggles too long, seized the legs and forcibly pulled at them downwards with his full weight. But the dreadful struggles lasted fully four minutes. At 8.30 the body ceased to move, save for an occasional tremor, and six minutes later the medical officer certified that life was extinct. It was then cut down, and the usual post-mortem examination made by the doctors. They found, as has been said, that the neck had not been broken, and that the cause of death was strangulation. The customary formal verdict was afterwards returned by a coroner's jury.

The following written statement was left by Birchall:

"Woodstock Gaol,
"November 10, 1890.

"If after my death there shall appear in the Press, or in any other manner whatsoever, any confession that I had a hand in the murder of Mr. F. C. Benwell, or any personal knowledge of said murder, with intent or malice aforethought, or any personal connection with the murderer on the seventh day, or any knowledge that any such murder was likely to be committed, or any statement further than any I have made public previous to this date, I hand this statement to the care of Mr. George Parry, of Woodstock, Ontario, that he may know that any confession or partial confession are totally fictitious, and in no way whatever written by me, neither emanated from me in any way whatever to any person, and the whole are fictitious, without a word of truth. This likewise applies to my story in the 'Mail,' in which I have made no confession or partial confession. This holds good throughout. "(Signed) REGINALD BIRCHALL."

Drunk on the Gallows.

WILLIAM ALLCOCK, a native of Bourne, in Lincolnshire, was hanged in 1732 for the brutal murder of his wife, whom he had cruelly deserted some two years before. He had married again on removing to Colchester, and, fearful that he might be charged with bigamy if the fact of his first marriage became known, he determined to get rid of her by any means, fair or foul. He accordingly proceeded to Bourne, arriving there on August 22, 1732, mounted on a good horse, and a new pillion for his wife to ride on behind him. During the journey he put up at a certain inn, and several times remarked to the host that his wife was "so disagreeable to him that he would rather be hanged than take her again."

However, Allcock discovered her whereabouts, and she started with him on the 24th, but on the day following her body was found in a ditch under a willow-tree, near Pilsgat, about eight miles from Bourne, and it was seen that she had been strangled with a small cord, which had been tied tightly round her neck. The murderer was arrested on his return to Colchester, and, being put upon trial, was convicted on the clearest possible evidence, though he stoutly denied his guilt to the last.

He evinced the most amazing depravity in the short interval between conviction and execution, and refused to listen to the clergymen who endeavoured to bring him to a sense of his perilous position. Convicts at that time could always obtain liquor, if they possessed the cash to pay for it, and Allcock on the morning of execution was hopelessly intoxicated. On the road to the gallows he sang the old ballad of Robin Hood, and at intervals swore, kicked, and spat at any person who ventured to touch the cart. When tied to the fatal tree he kicked off his shoes amidst the crowd, and struck the sacred volume out of the hands of a humane gentleman, who, shocked at the spectacle, had endeavoured to console him with a passage of the Scriptures. He died without having disclosed a particle of fear or a sign of remorse.

THE Curious Case OF Christian Sattler.

"If Justice must ever err, let her err on the side of mercy. There are and must ever be degrees in wickedness, and we should learn to discriminate, and while avenging the dead, see that no wrong is done to the living."

—HAMBERSTONE, "The Logic of Life."

"YES," said the old detective, as he slowly stirred the contents of his steaming glass, "some men have got off as might well have been hanged, and some have been hanged as might well have been spared, and my father always declared as Sattler was one of the latter." With this remark, sententiously expressed, he raised the glass to his lips and took a fairly deep draught of the hot beverage it contained.

We were sitting round the table in the long room of the old tavern by Scotland Yard at a period previous to the extensive alterations in that vicinity, and had been discussing many curious cases of great crime and notorious criminals. The name of Sattler had cropped up, and my friend the ex-detective had volunteered some interesting information regarding that personage, who had been hanged as far back as 1858 for a murder which had created no small sensation at that time.

The father of my friend, late of the Criminal Investigation Department, had been closely identified with the case in question, and had been instrumental in bringing Sattler to justice; but his son did not hesitate to declare that in his worthy progenitor's opinion this criminal should never have been hanged. "My father was positive that Sattler never intended to murder Thain," he explained to us, "and the latter's death may easily have been the result of an accident. But anyway, if murder it was, it was done on the spur of the moment, and without premeditation, and if Her Majesty had been advised to extend the royal prerogative in favour of poor Sattler, I venture to think that the public conscience at the time would have been better satisfied. However, they hanged him just the same as they would have done if he had been the most brutal of murderers, and that he certainly was not. He had been goaded into a frenzy of passion by harsh treatment, and I think a verdict of manslaughter would have met the justice of the case. That's what my father said, and I agree with him. Good night, gentlemen." And the ex-detective wound a thick, white comforter round his neck, buttoned up his overcoat of Irish frieze, and stepped out into the cold and boisterous wet of a particularly disagreeable February evening.

His remarks made some impression upon me at the time, for he had spoken earnestly, and with much conviction, and I decided there and then to seek an early opportunity of testing the accuracy of his views by a careful scrutiny of the records appertaining to Sattler's crime. These I obtained with some difficulty, and with their aid I am now in a position to relate this man's curious story in such a form as may interest my readers and enable them to form for themselves some opinion as to the rights and wrongs of a very strange chapter in criminal history.

Christian Sattler was certainly hanged for a murder; but I am very doubtful if he ever committed murder at all, and if a grave injustice was not done him. He was a foreigner in a strange land, and it does not appear that he was treated with quite such fairness and consideration as we mete out nowadays to those of a different race to ourselves. I can come to no other conclusion after studying the case in all its bearings, and may terminate this preamble with an expression of my conviction that in 1904 Sattler would most certainly have got off with seven years for a deed punished with death in the severer and less merciful days of 1858. But to my story.

Christian Sattler was by birth a Bavarian, and was born in the year 1821. He was described at his trial as a surveyor by profession, but I have not been able to ascertain that he ever made much of a living in that line, and most of his maturity was spent as a soldier of fortune. That is to say, he was with the French Army in Algeria for some years, and later served with the German Legion which was raised in this country, and became quartermaster. While quartered at Shorncliffe, he made the acquaintance of the young Swiss soldier, Dedea Redainies, who was hanged at Maidstone the year previous to Sattler for the murder of two girls near Dover. There were some wild characters attached to the Foreign Legion at that time, and Christian Sattler appears to have been eminently one of them. How he came to leave the army I am quite unable to say, but there is no doubt that he took to very irregular courses, and committed many robberies under various names. He was possessed of a character more resembling the French than the German type, being mercurial, and easily excited. I have been informed by one who knew him well that he was extremely grateful for any act of kindness, and equally vindictive and revengeful at the slightest offence. Though he cannot have been a good man, it is due to his memory to say that he was endowed with some excellent qualities, and he endeared himself not a little to those who had charge of him after his return to this country on board the "Caledonia."

"I would cut off pieces of flesh from my bones if asked to do so by one who did me a good turn," Sattler declared to one of his gaolers. "I am not like you English; it's either love or hate with me." He spoke English perfectly, and was, indeed, a splendid linguist, with a great passion for Italian, in which he was able to write and converse most fluently. His father had served under the great Napoleon, and was a man of repute in his own country. Such was Christian Sattler, who died the death of a common felon in our free and enlightened England.

The trial of this man took place on January 6th, 1858, at the Old Bailey, before Mr. Baron Martin and Mr. Justice Willis. He was charged on two indictments; to wit, for having wilfully murdered Inspector Thain on the high seas, and for the robbery of a carpet bag, a gold pin, three razors, and £230 in bank notes, the property of Arthur Ballantine. He pleaded "Not guilty" on both counts, and was defended by Mr. Lilley and Mr. B. Smith, while Mr. Bodkin and Mr. Sleigh represented the Crown. Only the first charge was proceeded with, but to the proper understanding of the case it is essential to give some particulars of the robbery, of which there is every reason to believe the prisoner was guilty.

On the 28th October, 1857, Sattler was discharged from the gaol at Wisbeach, where he had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment for the theft of a parcel containing baby-linen. He appears to have made his way to St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire, after leaving the gaol, and there he came across a Mr. Arthur Ballantine, a stockbroker, who was staying at the Golden Lion Inn. On the 2nd of November Sattler was seen about this hostelry, and on the same day the bull-and-bear gentleman missed from his room a carpet-bag containing much valuable property. Sattler decamped from St. Ives after this robbery, and proceeded to Cambridge, where he bought a watch for six guineas, and it was ascertained that he paid for the article with one of the twenty-pound notes stolen from Mr. Ballantine. Other items of property belonging to the last-named were traced to his possession, and the police were sent in search of him, the case being placed in the hands of Inspector Thain, a detective-officer of the City of London Police Force.

Information reached the authorities that Sattler had left the country, and Thain was induced to proceed to Hamburg, where the suspected man was captured by a ruse, the legality of which is seriously to be questioned. He was persuaded on some pretence to go on board the steamship "Caledonia" when that vessel arrived at Hamburg, and was promptly

placed under arrest by Inspector Thain, who was no doubt acting under orders from headquarters. But Sattler was a foreigner, owing no allegiance to an English monarch, and it appears certain that the officer had no right to capture his man in direct contradiction to the spirit of the Treaty of Extradition. The whole manner of Sattler's arrest was both illegal and unjust, and it is a matter for small wonder that the excitable foreigner deeply resented the course of treatment to which he was subjected.

Inspector Thain would seem to have harboured some animosity towards his prisoner, and there is not lacking evidence to show that he treated him from first to last with undue harshness. He insisted on handcuffing his captive, who complained that the irons being too small for him caused him considerable pain; but the officer took no steps to alleviate his sufferings, and Sattler may have begun to look for an opportunity for revenge. However that may be, Inspector Thain was shot, either through the fault or the misfortune of the prisoner, and as he died shortly after the ceeded there, and found the cabin full of smoke, which presently cleared away, revealing Sattler sitting on a chest, and Thain standing by with one hand on the prisoner and one on his own breast. The officer exclaimed, "Prisoner has shot me!" The witness, with others, assisted to drag Sattler on deck, and he was cuffed and buffeted by the other passengers, who treated him with every show of violence. The prisoner exclaimed that Thain had broken faith with him, and added, "I would shoot him or any other man without compunction who broke faith with me," but he was much excited, and did not appear to quite understand the extreme significance of his words. The prisoner further explained that he had loaded the pistol by holding it against the berth, and that he had just completed the process when Thain "came suddenly" upon him. The passengers on board were much incensed against the prisoner, and wanted to have him lynched, although Thain was not dead, and did not at that time seem to be very seriously injured. Sattler's arms were pinioned by a handkerchief tied behind him, and this caused

THE OFFICER EXCLAIMED, "PRISONER HAS SHOT ME!"

vessel reached this country, Sattler was duly committed for trial on the capital charge.

It appears, from the statement of the counsel for the Crown, that the "Caledonia" left Hamburg on November 20th, and on the 22nd the deceased left the accused alone in a cabin. Although handcuffed, Sattler contrived to get hold of a pistol and actually to load it, and when Thain returned to the cabin, the former, without a word, fired at him and wounded him severely in the chest. On the boat's arrival in London, the unfortunate officer was taken to Guy's Hospital, and though he was expected to recover, he experienced a relapse, and died at that institution on December 4th.

Stephen Robinson, a passenger on board the "Caledonia," gave evidence to the effect that the prisoner repeatedly complained that the handcuffs hurt him, and that the deceased said, "I have been warned of you, but I will take them off when you get to England if you behave yourself." About four o'clock on the afternoon of the 22nd, when on the high seas, the witness heard the sound of firing coming from the place where the prisoner was. He pro- him no inconsiderable pain. He made use of the expression, "Throw me overboard, hang me, do what you like with me, but don't torture me," and there can be no doubt that he was very harshly dealt with. He was then made fast by a chain put round his feet to a ring-bolt in the deck, and in this position he was quite at the mercy of the irate passengers, who teased and tormented him to their hearts' content.

When questioned, Sattler stated that he had bought the revolver to shoot a man at Hamburg who owed him £25, and also volunteered the information that when he loaded the weapon his intention was to shoot himself, but that Thain came on him without warning, and he said, "The bullet is as well in your breast as mine." (To this statement he always adhered, but added that Thain pushed his arm up, and himself caused the bullet to enter his chest, which was quite possibly true.) Sattler also said, "I am a Deist, a robber, and now, they say, a murderer. Well, I have shot the officer, and I suppose I shall be tried for it." In describing all this, it must be remembered that I am quoting the evidence of the witness Robinson, and it is necessary to explain here that Sattler stoutly denied that he had ever used

words which could be construed into an admission that he had wilfully shot the detective.

Edwin Hill, one of the City Police on duty at Bow Lane Police Station, stated that Sattler was brought there on November 23. His wrists and arms were badly swollen, and he asked the witness not to put the handcuffs on, as they greatly hurt him; but the officer said that he was obliged to, such being his orders. The prisoner grew very excited, and said that he was like Thain, "whom he had shot because he had broken his promise." He then inquired if Thain were likely to recover, and when the witness said that he thought it extremely likely, he expressed himself as glad.

Mr. Alexander M'Dougal, house surgeon at Guy's, stated that the deceased died there on the 4th of December, and that he conducted a post-mortem examination of the body, which contained three pistol bullets. The weapon had been discharged from a position close to deceased, who was in a stooping position at the time.

Mr. B. Easen, chief warder of the gaol at Wisbeach,

Made fast by a chain.

deposed that prisoner left there after serving three months' imprisonment, on the 28th of October, 1857. According to this witness, Sattler had asked how he was to get a living after his discharge, and had threatened violence to anyone who interfered with his attempts to secure a livelihood.

Mr. Arthur Ballantine, stockbroker, gave evidence respecting the robbery of his bag at the Golden Lion Inn, St. Ives, and remarked that he had seen the prisoner hovering about the place for two or three hours before the disappearance of his property. One of the £20 notes was traced to Cambridge, where it had been changed by the prisoner.

Mr. Lilley then rose to speak on behalf of the prisoner, whom he described as "a stranger in a strange land, who had elected to be tried by a jury of Englishmen, and expected to receive justice at their hands." Sattler was a foreigner, and not amenable to British laws, except by the process of extradition, a treaty in respect to which had been made with foreign nations especially to deal with cases like the present one. He had been lured on board the "Caledonia" on the most false pretences, and the arrest, he maintained, was an illegal one. The prisoner might, had he chosen, have used violence to resist what was nothing more nor less than an abduction. He had been what sailors called "Shanghai'd." He had been handcuffed and treated with much violence, and it was quite feasible that he had procured the pistol with a view to taking his own life. Thain entered the cabin, and perhaps struggled with his captive, and during this the weapon went off and the charge entered the chest of the unfortunate officer. It was dark in the cabin at the time, and Sattler could not have seen to aim deliberately at the left side of the chest of the deceased, as made out by the prosecution. On the whole, considering the absence of motive, the want of premeditation, the possibility of accident, and the unjust and harsh treatment of the man at the bar, he—the counsel—firmly believed that if the jury brought in a verdict rather of manslaughter than of wilful murder they would be dealing justly with this man.

Mr. Baron Martin summed up at great length and by no means favourably to the prisoner, who throughout the proceedings displayed the utmost firmness. The jury retired at ten minutes past five, and at twenty minutes to six announced that they had arrived at a decision—which proved to be "Guilty." The learned judge then addressed the prisoner, and gave it as his opinion that the verdict was a most just and correct one. No one, he ventured to say, who had heard the evidence could doubt for a moment that the prisoner had wilfully encompassed the death of an officer in the performance of what he believed, rightly or wrongly, to be his duty. The judge then proceeded to rather astonish the Court by remarking that the deceased appeared to have treated Sattler "with the greatest kindness," and then went on to pass sentence in the usual way. Before, however, he could reach the end of the painful formula, he was interrupted by the prisoner, who exclaimed with great vehemence that he "had not had a fair trial," and that he had known directly he saw the faces of the jurymen that they "were persons ignorant of the law." "I am a murdered man," said Sattler in thrilling tones. "I like the English laws, but I despise the English people."

The learned judge then completed the sentence, whereupon the condemned man shouted, "I am sentenced on probabilities. I did not shoot the man. It was done by accident. I intended to shoot myself, and the pistol went off and shot him. Do what you like with me. Roast me! kill me!" The prisoner was in a very violent and excitable state when he was removed from the bar.

During the weeks which intervened between the trial and the execution, Sattler's behaviour varied extremely; for while he was sometimes resigned and remorseful, at others he displayed extraordinary levity. He would not admit that he had intended to kill Thain; but he confessed to several robberies, and expressed sorrow for the irregular and vicious life he had latterly led. He recanted his Atheistic opinions towards the last, although he would not receive the visits of two Romish priests who came to see him, and "in whose tenets," he said, "I cannot admit to feeling any faith." His father wrote to him the day previous to his execution, pleading his great age and poor health as reasons for not being able to visit him before the end, and the convict wrote a suitable reply. He read a great deal from the Bible in Italian, and appeared to take great pleasure in the many beautiful passages as rendered in that fascinating tongue. Strange stories are told—two or three by Major Arthur Griffiths in his volumes about Newgate—of the levity occasionally displayed by Sattler, who was possessed of a very keen sense of humour. But I have it on good authority that he conducted himself with the utmost propriety at the last, and died a penitent man.

He was hanged at Newgate, and Calcraft was the executioner. When he appeared on the scaffold he bowed twice to the crowd, once in the direction of Giltspur Street, and once towards Ludgate Hill. He begged the executioner not to place the white cap on his head, saying proudly, "I have made my peace with God, and am not afraid to die"; and his request was granted. He seemed to die very easily and quickly, and the features after death were wonderfully calm and composed. Only a very small crowd had assembled to witness this execution, and many of them loudly hooted Calcraft for having, as they thought, forgotten to hide the convict's face. Many, too, sympathised with and pitied the unfortunate Bavarian, who may never have contemplated murder at all.

I met my friend, the ex-detective, a few weeks after I had completed my investigation of the curious case of Christian Sattler. "Ah," he said drily, "he was a German—a Bavarian is almost a German, isn't he?—and we weren't so partial to the 'Sauer-Krauts' then as we are now, when everything is made in the land of the Kaiser!"

Yet, on the whole, I think they might have spared poor Sattler; and, having told you the story, don't you?

THE

Liverpool Murders Of 1849.

Showing how a Prototype of Edgar Edwards slaughtered an entire family for a trifle of money and a few trinkets.

"All my pretty ones!
Did you say all? O, Hell Kite, all?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?"

—SHAKESPEARE, "Macbeth," Act IV., Sc. 4.

THE student of criminology is well aware how crime, like history, repeats itself. No startling murder has been committed but a case, almost precisely similar in motive, method, and circumstance, can be discovered in the blood-stained annals of the past. At the time that the recent Camberwell-Leyton atrocities loomed large in the public mind, a parallel to that case was found in the ghastly series of crimes enacted in the East End of London in the year 1811. As a matter of fact, the crime of Edwards, or Owen, resembled much more closely the dreadful series of murders committed in 1849 at Liverpool by John Gleeson Wilson, whose deeds of blood are still remembered, more or less vividly, by the inhabitants of the great seaport town. The two cases are, indeed, startlingly alike. Wilson, like his predatory successor, obtained an entrance into a respectable household by a trick; he slaughtered the entire family, including a defenceless infant who could not have given evidence against him; the motive was equally sordid, the method equally brutal, and it would be hard to say of these Dromios of crime which was the more savage and callous. Neither perpetrator made the small reparation of other murderers in the shape of a confession, and each met his death, not with the fortitude of the repentant man, but with the stoical indifference of confirmed savagery. The case of Wilson attracted no great attention outside Liverpool and its environs at the time. The year 1849 was a "great year" for tremendous crimes. London had its Bermondsey murder, with its exciting pursuit and capture of the Mannings, and all England watched the trial of James Bloomfield Rush, at Norwich, with even greater interest and attention.

Yet the Liverpool case supplied many features out of the ordinary, and an account of it is essential to any complete recital of famous crimes.

In the year 1849, then, there lived at 20, Leveson Street, Liverpool (a highly respectable street off Great George Square, now called Grenville Street), one Mrs. Henrichson, the wife of Captain Henrichson, who was master of the ship "Duncan," belonging to a well-known mercantile firm in that town. In the spring of that year Captain Henrichson was away at sea, and in his absence Mrs. Henrichson—in order to augment her income—decided to take in music pupils, and also to let to a respectable lodger the front bedroom on the first floor of her house, and the back parlour on the ground floor. The house in question—now called the Leicester Hotel—is a substantial one of three storeys, the kitchen and cellars, forming a considerable basement, being below the level of the street. Four or five stone steps lead to the hall door, to the left of which, going in, is the room which Mrs. Henrichson used as her own sitting-room, and in which the scene of horror was chiefly enacted.

The family consisted of Mrs. Henrichson, aged about twenty-nine years; her two little sons, the one about five and the other three years old, and Mary Parr, aged about thirty, a domestic servant.

On the afternoon of the 27th of March, 1849, there called at 20, Leveson Street a young man, apparently about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years, who described himself as being in want of apartments. He brought no luggage, and gave no rent in advance or reference of any kind, yet the confiding Mrs. Henrichson agreed to accept him as a lodger, and he went away, returning about six o'clock the same evening. He ordered some tea to be prepared for him, and partook of it in the back parlour, which had been assigned to him. At eight o'clock he sent the servant out for a pint of ale from a public-house in Great George Street, and shortly afterwards he retired to his bedroom, and was seen no more that night. It is conceivable that the sleep of the unfortunate Henrichson family that night would have been disturbed, indeed, had they known the nature of the beast that had come among them.

This man, who had given the name of John Wilson, was up betimes the next morning, and the servant, Mary Parr, noticed that he left the house about half-past seven. It was subsequently established that at nine o'clock he called at a hostelry in Great George Street, and there had a glass of ale. At the same time he asked the person serving behind the counter for a wafer to seal a letter, explaining that he wanted an address written on the envelope, but was himself unable to write. The landlady of the house good-naturedly agreed to write at his dictation, and, according to his directions, she wrote "Mr. John Wilson, No. 20, Leveson Street," on the envelope, which she cemented down with a bit of black sealing wax. The man, whose appearance made some impression upon the woman at the time, then left the tavern; and in Frederick Street he accosted a boy named Macdermott, whom he asked to "take this letter to where it is directed," adding that he would give him three-halfpence for his trouble. "Your best plan," he said, "is to watch me into the house, and in about five minutes after you see me go into the house, do you come to the door and ask for a person named Mr. Wilson. I will come to you. You can give me the letter, and say it came from my master." He then walked off towards the house, followed by Macdermott, who himself came to the door after seeing Wilson safely inside. Of the servant who answered the door, the boy inquired if Mr. Wilson lived there. The latter was standing behind her in the passage, and he then came forward and received the letter purporting to come from his employer, at the same time borrowing some coppers from Mrs. Henrichson to pay the boy.

John Gleeson Wilson.
From a Drawing made in Court.

At about eleven o'clock Mrs. Henrichson went out, leaving Wilson in the house, to make some necessary purchases. She bought a quantity of potatoes, which a youth brought to the house in her absence, and which were received by the man Wilson at the front door. The boy, on descending the steps, saw Mrs. Henrichson coming along the street. About twenty minutes later a second boy arrived at the house from the shop of a Mr. Roebuck with two jugs which Mrs. Henrichson had ordered to be sent home that morning. This boy knocked at the door a long time, but no response came, and at last he peeped through the keyhole and saw the feet and legs of a woman lying in the passage. Climbing on to the railings, he was able to look through the front parlour window, and there he saw the servant near the fireplace and the elder child lying close together, both apparently dead. In a state of great alarm, he ran home to report what he had witnessed, but while he was gone a young lady, a pupil of Mrs. Henrichson,

had also arrived at the house, and was much distressed at not being able to make anyone hear her knocks or rings. She complained to a Mr. Hughes, a neighbour, who was standing by, and he got upon the railings and peeped through the front parlour window, when he saw a woman in extremis upon the floor, with a child's arms about her. He at once broke a pane of glass, unfastened the window, and got into the room together with several others attracted to the spot by the young lady's cries.

On entering the house, a terrible scene presented itself to the startled gaze of all. The servant, not yet dead, lifted herself upon her elbow, stared wildly about, fell again, and groaned, but was quite unable to articulate a word. Near the servant was the body of the eldest boy, quite dead. He had no less than thirty distinct wounds on his head, his skull was beaten all to pieces, and his little finger was struck off by some jagged implement and was found stuck to his pinafore. Mrs. Henrichson—not quite dead, but horribly maltreated—was lying with her head in the parlour and her feet in the passage, and she had evidently been struck down from behind as she was about to enter the apartment from the passage. On a

A TERRIBLE SCENE PRESENTED ITSELF.

further search being made, the traces of blood, with which the parlour floor was covered, led to the scullery below stairs, and there was found the younger child with his throat cut literally from ear to ear, with a large and blood-stained carving knife, picked up by the murderer at random, beside him.

By this time police and medical assistance had been called in and the bodies were removed, after a cursory examination had been made, to the Southern Hospital. It may be said here that Mrs. Henrichson, whose head was terribly battered, died shortly after admission, never having regained consciousness, but, fortunately for the ends of justice, the poor servant lingered till Thursday morning, the 5th of April, and was able to furnish a full account of all that transpired. To return to the horrid scene. The police immediately proceeded to search the entire house, and, going upstairs, found enough to convince them that robbery had been the motive for the massacre. The drawers and boxes of Mrs. Henrichson had all been more or less disturbed, and one box, which contained several articles of jewellery and her purse, had been thoroughly ransacked. In the bedroom which the stranger had occupied the previous night they found unmistakable traces of the murderer's presence. The towels were marked with the imprint of bloody fingers, and the basin, containing blood-stained matter—the ruffian had evidently gone calmly upstairs to wash his hands after the deed—had been emptied beneath the bed. The hue and cry after Wilson now commenced in earnest, but a day or two was to elapse before the public, enormously excited by the crimes, was to have the satisfaction of hearing of his capture. Let us trace the miscreant's movements, as detailed at his subsequent examinations and ultimate trial.

A few minutes before twelve three carmen were standing together in Great George Street, shortly before the discovery of the murders, and they noticed a man walking hastily from the direction of No. 20, Leveson Street. He was attired in a dark blue plaid shooting-coat, light cord trousers, a black hat, with crape on it, and was going in the direction of a part called Windsor. These carmen particularly noticed this person, for, though it was a cold day, he appeared to be hot and excited, and was wiping the perspiration from his brow perpetually. No wonder, for the man was fresh from his scene of carnage at No. 20! At twelve-thirty the same morning this man was observed by a person named Keane near a pond in a field at Windsor, then quite a rural part of Liverpool. Wilson washed his boots and trousers at this pond, and dried them with a handkerchief, which, together with the envelope directed to himself, in order to deceive Mrs. Henrichson, was found on the spot next day. At about half-past twelve he called at the pawnshop of Mr. Tunstall, in the London Road, and there offered a valuable gold watch for sale. He wanted £8 for this watch, but no deal resulted here, and we next hear of him purchasing a pair of black trousers at a shop in Great Homer Street, for which he gave 13s. He attired himself in these inside the shop, and on re-entering the street he offered his old trousers, done up in paper, to the first man he met, a pavior, named Worthington. This man accepted the cast-off trousers, and on inspecting them later found that they were wet and had spots of blood on them. In Scotland Road he exchanged his clumsy Wellington boots for a new pair of short boots, and at four o'clock he went to his old lodgings in Porter Street, kept by a person named Collopy, who had not seen him since the day before the murders. Here he changed his shirt, putting

on a clean one supplied him by the landlady in response to a promise of some money, and the shirt he abandoned was also found to be stained with blood. He also paid for some food, pulling out a purse with some beads on it, which was certainly the property of the unfortunate Mrs. Henrichson, whose gold watch and chain he also freely displayed here. At six in the evening he was shaved by a Mr. Samuel,

Struck down from behind.

in Great Howard Street, and the barber particularly noticed the agitation under which the man was labouring and the fact that he was "all of a sweat all day," as Wilson himself remarked during the shaving process. He asked this Samuel if he could provide him with a wig, and inquired about a passage to America. That night Wilson spent with his wife, from whom he had been separated, on account of his brutal habits, for a long time. At half-past eight the next morning Wilson called again at the shop of Mr. Samuel, and agreed to take £6 for the watch, but the barber was suspicious, and requested his son, in Hebrew, to escort the man to his other shop and to give him in charge, if possible, on the way. Not suspecting the trap laid for him, Wilson departed with the junior Samuel, in order to obtain the money "at the latter's other shop," but when they came near the police-station Samuel collared the stranger, gave him into custody, and John Gleeson Wilson, wholesale murderer, was in the hands of justice, never to escape again!

He was duly detained on suspicion, but it does not appear that he was immediately suspected of being the much-wanted "hero" of the Leveson Street battue. Jenny Lind was singing at the Philharmonic Hall that evening, and the magistrates and chiefs of police were present listening to the dulcet tones of the Scandinavian nightingale, when a report came in that a man who might be Wilson was in custody. A certain superintendent—against whom the prisoner subsequently showed the greatest animosity—appears to have first woke up to the importance of the capture, and the prisoner was soon fully identified, firstly by the boy who had delivered the sack of potatoes to the house on the eventful morning, and secondly by the man who had seen him trying to remove the damning proofs of his guilt in the field at Windsor. The prisoner, however, denied all knowledge of the affair. He displayed great levity, and when his cap, a new one, was removed in order that the witnesses to identification might be the better able to see his face, he snatched it back from the hands of the inspector, saying angrily, "That's mine! I paid for that with my own money!"

On the 4th of April he was taken to the hospital and there confronted with the dying servant, whose life he had so untimely ended. She displayed great terror at the sight of him, but Wilson surveyed her without a tremor, and was quite unmoved when she fully identified him as the person who had taken the rooms and had brutally assailed her.

Her deposition was not admitted at the trial, but it fully described, the witness being in fear of death at the time, all that had transpired. It conclusively established the guilt of the prisoner, if any further proof were needed, and, coming straight from the bed of death, the poor girl's testimony created a great sensation at the time. She declared that after her mistress had gone out the prisoner came from the back to the front parlour, pretending to read a newspaper. She was cleaning the grate at the time, and the prisoner jocularly drove the children from the room by hitting them with the paper. She expostulated at his conduct, saying that her mistress allowed no one to strike the children, even in play, and he then desisted, and, picking up the tongs, asked her the price of a set of fire-irons of that description. She was then kneeling at the grate, and she looked round to reply to his question, when he struck her with all his force with the tongs on the skull, and she remembered nothing more. He must then have attacked the elder child, and the younger must have run from the horrible spectacle, with the idea of hiding from the assassin, but the latter, abandoning the tongs, which were found all broken and bloody, followed the poor mite to the basement and nearly severed its head from its body with the carving knife he found there. He himself admitted Mrs. Henrichson to this slaughter-house, followed her up the passage till she was just inside the door of the parlour, and then struck her from behind with the poker, with which he had armed himself after the murder of the baby.

The excitement created in and around Liverpool by these horrors was indescribable. Upon being brought up for examination crowds assembled to catch a glimpse of the prisoner, who was the object of much hostility from the populace, and who, by reason of his frivolous cross-examination of certain witnesses, was openly hooted in court on several occasions. His animus was great against the superinten-

He was shaved by Mr. Samuel.

dent who had first suspected him to be Wilson, and he often expressed a wish to be alone with that gentleman "for ten minutes with a poker in my hand."

He was ultimately committed to take his trial for the murder of Mary Parr, at Liverpool, on August 22nd, and in the meanwhile something became known of his antecedents. His real name was discovered to be Maurice Gleeson, a mem-

ber of a depraved Irish family of that name, and most of his relatives had either been or were at that time in Irish gaols. He gave few particulars regarding his early career, and spent most of his time before the trial in enjoying hearty meals, chaffing the warders, and walking about his cell whistling the popular airs of the day. He had been at sea at one time or other, and it was popularly supposed that, besides the motive of robbery, the murders had been consummated out of revenge upon Captain Henrichson, who had excited his ire when he was under the captain on some voyage. This, however, was never clearly established, and the fact that Wilson had, on the day previous to his crimes, visited another house for the purpose of taking rooms, inquired of the landlady "if there were any men in the house," and asked if she possessed a watch, seems to point to a policy of crime in which sordid robbery alone was the mainspring. That he had meditated some such devilish crime for some days before its actual commission is certain.

John Gleeson Wilson was tried on August 22nd and 23rd, 1849, before Mr. Justice Patteson. The author of this account has a picture of Wilson before him as he writes. He was a sturdily-built young man of about 5 feet 7 inches, clean-

Samuel collared the stranger.

shaven, grey-eyed, and having the appearance—as one witness said—"of a fighting man." His features were not unpleasant in repose, but his chin told of great obstinacy, and he could look extremely angry when he chose. His hair was cut short behind, but he grew a heavy lock of hair over one eyebrow, and this he would continually be tossing away, twitching and throwing up his head when it obscured his sight. For the rest, he looked like a labourer, and he spoke very rapidly, with a strong Irish accent.

At the trial Mr. Serjeant Wilkins, Mr. Blair, and Mr. Paget appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. Pollock and Mr. Brett appeared for the prisoner, who pleaded "Not guilty" in a loud and confident tone. After Mr. Paget had detailed the facts as above given, the following witnesses were called: Mary Nott was the first, and she happened to be at Mrs. Henrichson's house when the prisoner called to look at the apartments; she was able to identify the watch and chain produced as being the property of the unfortunate lady. Edward Macdermott was called to testify that he had taken a letter to the prisoner, at 20, Leveson Street at the latter's request, and he said that Wilson took the letter, purporting to come from his governor, and gave him three penny pieces. Anthony Kearney was a greengrocer's messenger, and knew Mrs. Henrichson, who came to his shop on the morning of March 28 and purchased some potatoes, which he took to her house after she had left the shop. When he rang the bell the prisoner at the bar opened the door about half way, took the basket from him, and shut the door, soon returning, however, and giving him the empty basket; he noticed that he had a handkerchief tied round his chin, and there was blood upon his hands, and he was in a profuse perspiration. Daniel Roebuck deposed how he took a jug and two eggcups to 20, Leveson Street, articles which Mrs. Henrichson had ordered the day before, but he was unable to make anyone hear. He got on to the ledge of the parlour window and saw a child and a young woman bleeding on the floor, and the woman was groaning. He went back to his father, told him what he had seen, and the latter soon arrived with a police officer. John Hughes, who was standing by when the last witness gave the alarm, effected an entrance into the front room by breaking a pane of glass, and he discovered the bodies. The elder child was conscious, and tried to speak, but could not, and the servant rose on her hands and knees, looking wild and savage, but was inaudible. John Martin, a surgeon, described the various injuries of the victims, and said there must have been twenty or more blows given to the head of the servant alone. Samuel Clough, a constable, produced a poker which he had found in the slaughter-room, bent as he now showed it, and much blood on the heavy end of it, and another officer, Henry Power, produced an iron fire-shovel covered with blood and hair, found near the servant girl. James Wilson deposed to finding the knife with which the younger child's throat was cut in the lower kitchen. Thomas Quirk, a superintendent of police, produced the box that was found broken open. He found in the front bedroom a wash-basin in which some person had been recently washing, and some blood-stained water had been thrown under the bed quite recently; a towel on the dressing-table was wet, and was tinged with something red like blood.

At this stage of the proceedings the deposition of Mary Parr was tendered and rejected, and Mr. Justice Paterson, during the discussion which took place between the counsel, retired to consult on the point with Mr. Justice Wrightman, who was engaged in another court. When his lordship retired from the bench, the gaoler removed the prisoner from the bar, and as he turned round and faced the crowd at the back of the court, he was met with a loud yell of execration. The officers of the court called out "Silence!" "Order!" in all directions, and this seemed to encourage Wilson, who, turning quickly on the crowd, said, with a most savage and fiendish expression of countenance, "I'll punch your b—— heads if I get out of this box!"

On the return of the judge, three car-drivers, named Presscot, Jones, and Massey, came forward to depose that they had seen the prisoner in Great George Street about the time of the murders, and he seemed "all in a sweat, and greatly excited." Michael Cain said he saw the prisoner go to the Figure of Eight Pit, Prince's Park, on March 28, sometime after twelve, and he observed him wash his face, his feet, and the front of his trousers. The next day Cain and John Marks, a policeman, went to this spot, and the latter produced a letter and a handkerchief which he had found at the place where the accused had been seen. George Moore, pawnbroker's apprentice, 207, London Road, said the prisoner offered the watch now produced in pledge on March 28, and asked £8 on it, but he refused, and Wilson asked him what he was staring at. He replied, "Handsome men must expect to be stared at," and at this there was much laughter in court, in which Wilson was seen to join heartily. Joshua Finn, a pawnbroker, and Henry Worthington, a pavior, deposed, the one to having sold the prisoner a pair of black trousers which he put on in the shop, and the other to the prisoner giving him a pair of light trousers outside Finn's shop. They had marks of blood on them, which had been smeared over with mud. James Oswin said the prisoner called at his shop on March 28 and bought a pair of boots for 8s. 6d., which he put on there and then, and to Ellen Needham, who was also in Oswin's shop at the time, he sold the Wellington boots he had been wearing for two shillings. Margaret Collopy's evidence was of importance, for the prisoner had stayed at her house on many occasions before the murders, and she deposed that when he returned to her place on the 29th of March he was wearing a new pair of dark trousers and a pair of new boots. He had on a watch like the one produced. "He asked me for a clean shirt, and I would not let him have one of my husband's shirts till he had paid me for his board and lodging. He showed me a purse, and asked me was I diffident about him, and did I think he had no money to pay me, at the same time pulling some

money out of the purse. He then went away, but returned on Thursday morning, and after breakfast he went and bought a cap, giving his hat to one of my lodgers. When he left me he looked uneasy."

Jacob Samuel was next examined. He said that he was a hairdresser, and that on the 28th of March the prisoner came to his shop a little after six in the evening. He asked to be shaved, though he was not really in want of that operation, and then he washed himself, and the witness noticed some blood on his wrist when he pulled his coat off. He was perspiring, and he made use of the remark, "D——n it to h——l! what makes me sweat so?" The witness asked him what the blood was on his wrist, and he said that he had knocked it against the works at the new railway. He asked if witness had a wig that would fit him, and when the latter offered to take him to a place where he could obtain one, he inquired on the way the price of a passage to America, and asked if the witness had heard of any murders. He suddenly ran away, and called out as he was going that he would see Samuel again.

The next witness was also named Samuel, and he testified how his son had collared the prisoner, who had been attempting to sell the watch, outside the police station—which the latter was unwilling to pass—and given him into custody, while John Tolle, police officer, and Mr. Clough, superintendent, spoke as to the prisoner's conduct and remarks when charged at the station.

The defence resembled that made recently on behalf of that deplorable person, Edgar Edwards. No sane man, it was argued, could have committed such appalling acts for so little gain, but no evidence of any insanity in the prisoner or his family was brought forward, and the prisoner himself, unlike Edwards, made no attempt to substantiate his defender's plea. The judge repudiated the line of defence in strong terms. He declared that if on account of the brutal ferocity of an offence the jury were to presume a man to be insane, there might as well be no law or justice in society at all. The jury were only absent from the box for a few minutes. They returned with a verdict of "Guilty," pronounced without any hesitation, and the judge proceeded to sentence the prisoner, expatiating on the callous indifference to human life shown by the merciless man in the dock. Wilson, who had been somewhat restless and excited during the recital of the sentence, replied to the last words of the judge referring to the hope of Divine pardon in a bold and presumptuous tone, "He has mercy already, my lord."

He was then removed from the bar. A rush was then made from the crowded court, and the result of the trial was made known in the streets outside, where an immense concourse of people had congregated. When it was known that sentence of death had been recorded against Wilson, a loud shout rent the air, and must have grated harshly on the ears of the condemned man as he was driven away, while the judge was loudly cheered. Extraordinary stories as to the conduct of the prisoner in gaol soon got abroad, and this one at least is not apocryphal. On one occasion, Wilson was being taken for a little fresh air, and he suddenly observed some hammers left by labourers who had been working in the yard. In an instant he rushed away from his warder, and seized one of them. The keeper instantly followed, grasping him by the back and holding him fast; but the murderer began to kick, strike, and bite, and would have overpowered the warder had not two of the prisoners come to his assistance. The three with difficulty restrained

CONFRONTED WITH THE DYING SERVANT.

him till further help arrived, when, on being secured, he lamented that he had not a knife, asserting—and no one doubted him—that he would have ripped them all open. He was then manacled, and declared that he would not eat anything for three days; but, though he kept his resolve, on the fourth he not only resumed his food, but demanded all the arrears!

Another true story in connection with these appalling crimes was told by a Mr. Parsons, of Mill Street, surgeon to Mrs. Henrichson and an intimate friend of that poor lady's husband. This gentleman called at her house on the evening before the murders, and Mrs. Henrichson told him all the circumstances as to the apartments being taken by Wilson. Mr. Parsons remarked upon the impropriety of accepting as a lodger the very first-comer who presented himself without reference or inquiry, and added, "Suppose he was to get up in the night and murder you all?"

Sadly indeed was this suggestion realised.

Captain Henrichson, it may be mentioned, learnt of his fearful loss at St. Helena on the voyage home, and at first could not believe his informant; but, staggered by the serious demeanour of the latter, and being assured that the

intelligence was only too true, he fell upon the floor in a fit, and it was a long time before he could bear to hear the terrible story in its entirety.

Gleeson Wilson was hanged on Saturday, September 15, 1849. Up to the time when he retired to rest, which was about three o'clock on the Saturday morning, he appeared quite calm; still, he seemed to have no wish to go to bed, and, though often requested to do so by the officers in attendance upon him, he refused to comply. When he did retire, he was so overpowered with sleep that he would have fallen off his chair had not the officer prevented him from doing so. Before going to bed, he asked that he might be called at six, and the request was promptly complied with. When he awoke, he still displayed the same indifference to his fate, and he paid little attention to the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Marshall and the Rev. Mr. Duggan, Roman Catholic priests, who remained in attendance upon him till the end.

When his breakfast was brought to him at eight o'clock, he refused to partake of any; but about eleven o'clock he expressed a wish for some refreshment and a cup of coffee and some bread and butter were supplied, of which he partook heartily. Shortly before twelve o'clock, when he was brought into the press-room, he was placed upon the usual chair, and the process of pinioning commenced. He looked around him and at those near him with a painful indifference, but just before the completion of the pinioning, he offered up an incoherent prayer, and declared that he was an innocent man; and at twelve o'clock, as the procession approached the scaffold, the culprit again repeated, extraordinary as it may seem, that he was altogether innocent.

He seized one of them.

In the meanwhile enormous crowds had collected in the vicinity of the gaol. Never in the history of Lancashire had the execution of a criminal excited the same interest in the public mind, and many people came hundreds of miles to witness the extinction of the remarkable criminal. As early as seven o'clock in the morning many hundreds had wended their way to Kirkdale in order to secure the best possible view of the gallows, and every hour increased the multitude. Various estimates of the number of persons present have been made, and the lowest was computed at 100,000, while the railway companies turned the occasion to profit by actually running special trains to the great seaport town from all parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Madame Tussaud had a representative present to possess at the earliest moment the clothes of the murderer for exhibition in the metropolis, and Mr. Bally, the eminent phrenologist, was also present to take a cast of his head. A barrier was erected round the scaffold for the accommodation of persons connected with the Press and others, the pressure upon which was so great that an irruption seemed every moment inevitable, notwithstanding the steady efforts of the police and javelin men to force back the surging and excited crowd. A few moments before noon the iron gate leading to the drop was opened and immediately the prisoner appeared between the two priests the horror he inspired found expression in terrific bursts of popular execration. The priests read in English the service of the Catholic Church for the departing soul and the lips of Wilson were seen to move to the responses. He looked calmly on the dense mass of human beings before him without evincing the slightest tremor of nervousness, and as the bolt was drawn the priests continued to pray on their knees.

Calcraft, the executioner, was ill, and unable to be in attendance, the horrid office being performed by the less experienced Howard, from York, and the inefficiency of the new functionary was offensively painful at the critical moment. Instead of the cap being drawn over the face, as usual, the whole of the features of the murderer in the agony of death were distinctly visible. His sufferings, however, were brief, for he seemed to die almost immediately, the neck being broken by the fall; and, in response to the shouts of "Cover his face! Cover his face!" from those nearest the gallows, the hangman lowered the cap and concealed the features. Thus terminated the existence of one of the greatest criminals that ever disgraced the human family.

Over fifty years have elapsed since Gleeson Wilson met his fate. The scene of his crimes was immediately turned into a public-house, and the grate in the front parlour became a spectacle with the morbid and the curious. The house has been licensed premises ever since, and though recently repapered, re-painted, and renovated, it is in all particulars as it was when Wilson, the murderer, took lodgings there. The front parlour is now the bar and the back sitting-room a comfortable lounge. The counter in the former room extends over the notorious grate; but part of the latter is still plainly to be seen, and the present landlord has no objection to showing the ill-fated spot and also a book of newspaper cuttings and a wood-cut engraving of the crimes as they were discovered to anyone sufficiently curious to ask to see them. The unfortunate husband and father, Captain Henrichson, returned to England prior to Wilson's execution, quite heartbroken since hearing the news of his dear ones' loss. He displayed a great anxiety to see and confront the murderer, but was ultimately persuaded by his friends to abandon the wish.

Last November the writer was in the cemetery attached to St. James's Church, Liverpool. There is a large monument there, and it is sacred to the memory of the Henrichson family. Beneath the names of the victims, "who fell asleep on the 28th of March, 1849," appear the tender words:

"In their lives they were beautiful,
And in death they were not divided."

When He Got Justice.

LORD COCKBURN once defended a prisoner at the Scotch bar, and failed to secure an acquittal, the accused being condemned to be hanged on the 28th of the same month. As the condemned man was being removed from the dock he seized his counsel by the gown and said to him, "I have not got justice, Mr. Cockburn," to which the latter gravely replied, "Perhaps not, but you'll get it on the 28th."

A Corpse Arrested.

WHEN Sheridan died his body was removed to the house of a friend in Great George Street, Westminster, where it lay in state, and many friends of the deceased called to take a last look at the remains. A man dressed in deep mourning called with the rest, saying he had known the deceased a long time, and had come a very long distance to obtain a parting glimpse of his old friend. The attendant, with some show of reluctance, opened the lid of the coffin. The friend gazed for a moment at the face of the dead man, then slowly producing a paper and a bailiff's wand, he touched the face and said, "I arrest the corpse in the King's name for a debt of £500." The funeral group assembled before the explanations were finished, and a most unseemly delay and exposure seemed imminent. The matter was mentioned to Canning, who took Lord Sidmouth aside and begged his advice. In order to prevent the funeral arrangements being stopped, each gave a cheque for £250 to the bailiff, but a very considerable delay was caused by this indecorous interference.

HOW

REDMOND O'HANLON

MET HIS MATCH.

"Villain, a horse! Villain, I say, give me a horse to fly,
To swim the river, villain, and to fly."
—GEORGE PEEL, "Battle of Alcazar."

IMMEDIATELY succeeding the Cromwellian struggle in Ireland, Redmond O'Hanlon and his followers commenced a huge system of blackmail. The north was his favourite hunting-ground, but it was said that he was in league with other bands of marauders who levied toll throughout Ireland, and met four times in the year to make equal division of the gross spoil.

Redmond O'Hanlon was loved by the poor and dreaded by the rich, from which it will be gathered that he robbed only the latter and helped the former. He was a Roman Catholic, generous by nature, and a friend to the poor and oppressed. Standing a shade over six feet in his stockings, broad-shouldered, handsome, and athletic, he was the darling of the pretty Irish colleens, the favourite of the small farmers and peasants, the admiration and envy of the young men who were too honest to join his band of rapparees.

Many stories of his prowess, his generosity, and his bravery are told, but Redmond met his match on one occasion, as we shall now recount. It was one of O'Hanlon's boasts that he knew of every penny that was being carried within a radius of a hundred miles. Certain it is that landlords and their agents were afraid to collect their dues, with the result that the tenants lived practically rent free.

A certain gentleman, who lived in Dundalk, was the owner of a large number of houses in Newry, and the rents had not been collected for upwards of a year. He was bewailing his bad luck to some of his friends one evening at dinner, and telling them that he was afraid to send a messenger, as he would most certainly be stopped on the return journey and eased of the coin. A half-witted servant, who was waiting at table, heard his master telling the story of his fears and predicament, and the following day he went to the gentleman and asked him for a few minutes' private conversation. His request being granted, he expressed his readiness to go to Newry and collect the rents, asserting his confidence in his ability to return home safely with the money. At first the gentleman was inclined to ridicule the lad's idea; but the boy (he was but sixteen) was so very persistent that he at length consented to allow the lad to venture on the trip. Armed with due authority the young fellow, Marty McCue by name, went out and borrowed a broken-winded old screw, with spavined legs and roaring proclivities, broken-kneed, and suffering from every disease to which equine flesh is heir. Early in the morning he started on his journey, armed with a written authority from his employer. Having collected the rents, amounting to nearly three hundred pounds, he mounted his noble charger, and set out on his return journey. He had only travelled some five or six miles when he was overtaken by a well-dressed gentleman, mounted on a fine, upstanding, powerful blue roan stallion, and who entered into conversation with Marty, who made no secret of his having a large sum of money in his possession.

"I wonder," said the gentleman, "you are so free in your communications with a stranger. How can you tell but that I may be Redmond O'Hanlon, or one of his boys?"

HEARING A CLATTER OF HOOFS HE LOOKED UP.

"Oh," answered Marty, bursting into a laugh, "such a fine-looking gentleman as you to be a robber! Do you think I am blind?"

"Well, at all events, I advise you to be more discreet. Redmond O'Hanlon is famous at disguises, and will pin you if he gets wind of your business. Here's a crown for you to drink my health, but keep a bridle on your tongue." And so saying, he put spurs to his horse, and galloped ahead, leaving Marty to travel alone.

Some few miles farther on, as the spavined old nag plodded wearily and laboriously home, the gentleman suddenly emerged from a lane leading off the high road, and, riding alongside the boy, again addressed him:

"Well, my lad, ghud dhemur tha thu? (How are you?) I suppose you have not met with any bad company, and your money is safe?"

"Indeed it is, sir; many thanks for your good advice!"

"How are you carrying it?"

"In this big bag, sir."

"Hand over that bag, then," said he, very sternly for so smooth-spoken a gentleman.

"Oh, sir, sure, you wouldn't rob me?"

"I'm not so sure about that; but if you don't give it up at once I will send a bullet through you, and another through your garrin."

"Wurrah dheelish! (Sweet Virgin) I promised my master not to let myself be robbed till I was in danger of my life. So send a bullet through the brim of my hat and one through the skirt of my coat, and then he'll think I've kept my word."

O'Hanlon, for it was he, at once took the lad's hat off his head, spun it in the air, and, with marvellous aim, sent a bullet through the brim as it descended. Then, riding to within six feet of the boy, he told him to hold his coat out and not to fear; and Marty having done so, a bullet from the highwayman's remaining pistol went whizzing through the skirt.

"Here is the money, but you must take the trouble of crossing the ditch for it"; and, saying this, he threw the well-filled bag over the hedge, saying, "Baraght lath a rogorah" (My blessing with you, you rogue).

Redmond, somewhat annoyed, dismounted, scrambled over the ditch and quickly secured the bag. Hearing a clatter of hoofs, he looked up, and saw the stupid-looking youth mounted on his (O'Hanlon's) good blue roan, galloping full speed on the road to Dundalk. Quickly opening the bag, he was enraged to find that it contained, not the golden coin of the realm, but only brass buttons!

The boy arrived safely at Dundalk with the money sewn in his waistcoat, whilst, if anybody wanted to pick a quarrel with Redmond O'Hanlon after that day, he had only to ask him when he last met Marty McCue.

Charms Criminals Carry.

Some Strange Stories of Superstition.

ONE would naturally think that those who prey upon the public would be the very last to give way to superstition, yet those who have made a study of criminals assure us that no body of people believe so much in Fate and its inscrutable decrees, as well as in the power of certain charms to alter destinies, as the habitual offenders.

Apart from the curious superstitions which obtain among the criminals themselves, credulity, in the shape of a belief in "mascottes" and such things, has often a good deal to do with cases which come into the courts. For instance, a Viennese professor asserts that on one occasion he saw a maiden on the point of being condemned to several years' imprisonment for the theft of a valuable opal ring. The girl declared that the jewel had been given to her in the street by a woman whom she had never seen before. On stricter investigation the story was found to be perfectly true, for a wealthy dame, fearing that opals brought bad luck, and having experienced a series of reverses, determined to shift the burden on to somebody else's shoulders. In that case she was nearly bequeathing ill-fortune to the poor girl to whom she gave the gem.

In many parts of Europe a belief in the fall of cards is firmly implanted in the minds of the people, and many an innocent person has been accused of crime because the cards have said that he or she committed a theft or a murder.

In the "Life of Calcraft," published in a previous number, we have an instance of the supposed power contained in the hand of a person just hanged to cure wens, and in the grim pages of criminal history we find many similar cases.

The liver of a child was supposed to confer invisibility, and as late as 1650 a child was murdered in order that its liver might be used for that purpose. Again, in the old magicians' books we learn that to drink the blood of a human being, obtained by crime, is a certain cure for epilepsy, and, incredible as it may seem, the South of Europe can still produce cases where this cannibalistic remedy has been employed.

A belief in these same books led a couple of German soldiers to be charged with murder some three years ago. These learned "magicians" had read that if a certain formula was repeated several times, a man's head could be cut off and put on again without him suffering the least in consequence. Furthermore, a man thus treated would have the power to find any treasures which might be hidden in the district in which he was. After a little persuasion one of their comrades consented to submit to the operation, and after the spell had been repeated, his head was struck off with one blow of a sword. Alas! he went to look for treasures in another world, and was quickly followed by his two companions.

As to the actual charms believed in by criminals themselves, many a burglar has been turned from the "crib" which he intended to crack because a bat has flown past him while he was on his way to the scene of operations. Poachers frequently carry the small roots of one of the polypodia ferns which grow in the form of tiny hands, and are known among them as "St. John's Hands," believing that thereby they insure success in their depredations and immunity from capture.

From ancient times peculiar powers have been ascribed to the mandrake, but it will probably be news to our readers to learn that to have a piece of this root in one's pocket is the first step towards being a skilful lock-picker, and should be possessed by all thieves who value their profession. The three-card-trick man and the thimble-rigger pin their faiths respectively on the dried heart of a bat and on a broken button, while the horse-stealer carries a small piece of "milt," which is supposed to prevent the stolen animal from whinnying.

If you wish to make a criminal tell the truth, take care that he has no mistletoe leaves in his shoes, that he does not catch hold of one of his trouser buttons and twist it off, and that he does not double up his fist in his pocket, for though the latter may be merely a preparation for striking home his assertion, yet, in common with others, it is supposed to counteract the ill effects of a false oath. A more effectual method of evading committing perjury is for the deponent to place his left hand in exactly the opposite position to that occupied by his right when swearing, it being pretty generally believed that then the oath passes through the body without doing the individual any harm.

Such superstitions as the bad luck attending the crossing of a hare, the sight of one magpie, and so forth, are common to all, and need not be classed with criminal instances of credulity.

The Judge's Fault.

CHIEF JUSTICE PARSONS, the celebrated American judge, was considered very strong and somewhat overbearing on the bench towards counsel. One day he stopped Dexter, the famous criminal lawyer, in the middle of his address to the jury on the ground that he was urging a point that was unsupported by any evidence. Dexter hastily observed, "Your honour did not argue your own cases in the way you require us to do." "Certainly not," retorted the judge; "but that was the judge's fault, not mine."

RANSOMS were formerly paid by prisoners, and were appropriated by great men to build their castles. They were generally taxed at a year's income.

A Tragedy of Errors.

THE SAFFRON HILL AFFRAY OF 1865.

Was Pellizzioni or Gregorio Guilty?

"In most of the tragedies of human life exists an element of comedy. It is possible to smile even in the midst of tears."
—ROCHEFOUCAULD.

IN the interesting reminiscences which he bequeathed to the public before his premature death, Mr. Montagu Williams, the eminent barrister, described this case as one of the most remarkable of his career. There is nothing at first sight in a stabbing affray amongst Italians of any special or abiding interest; nevertheless, out of this sordid and unpromising material grew a "famous crime" which assuredly deserves a place in these columns. It is even now remembered as a singular and sensational instance of doubtful or mistaken identity, and is often quoted in this connection. To this day it is uncertain whether Pellizzioni or Gregorio struck the blow which deprived Michael Harrington of life.

The affair led to no less than three trials, and was quite without precedent, for Pellizzioni was in the condemned cell at Newgate under sentence of death for the murder of Harrington, while Gregorio was in Millbank, about to undergo five years' penal servitude for the manslaughter of the same individual. A solution of the enigma had to be found, and it was resolved to try Pellizzioni afresh, the murder being regarded as so important and the question so momentous that two judges came down to the Old Bailey to preside over the inquiry.

The strange and unusual circumstances were discussed all over England, and few trials, considering the commonplace character of the original offence, have attracted such universal attention and remark. Rochefoucauld's lines aptly describe the situation, for there was a distinct element of comedy in the proceedings, although it might not be apparent to the two aliens principally concerned. But the whole story is well worth recording, and I can, without further preamble, proceed to relate it.

The murder of Michael Harrington occurred in the region of Saffron Hill, where was—and is—situated the Italian colony of our wonderful city, which harbours foreigners from all parts of the world. There is the French colony round about Soho, the German in the side streets off Shaftesbury Avenue, the Russian in the East End, and many others. We know to our cost that these nations do not send their best representatives amongst the immigrants to this country. The aliens are mostly recruited from the criminal classes, and they leave their country for their country's good—and the detriment of ours. But I do not think that this summary of their characters should be too sweepingly applied to the Italians, who are, as a rule, the least offensive and criminally inclined of all our foreigners. The organ-grinders and ice-cream merchants, however much we may disapprove of their methods, do, at any rate, endeavour to obtain an honest livelihood, and I remember two very pretty daughters of Italy who used to tell fortunes with the aid of love-birds and sing on our racecourses of the South of England—but that's another story.

In the neighbourhood of Saffron Hill there is, or was in 1865, a public-house called the Golden Anchor, which was a favourite resort of the Italian fraternity. In the month of December, 1864, this tavern was kept by a man named Frederick Shaw, and on the evening of Boxing Day of that year took place the affray which resulted in the death of one man and the serious injury of another. At about six o'clock an Italian, named Seraphini Polioni, or Pellizzioni, as he was more commonly called, entered this house, calling for liquor, and it was at once apparent that something had upset his mind and quickened his lively southern blood. He made some sanguinary remarks to the effect that he would kill the landlord or any Englishman like him. There were several of his compatriots in the tap-room at the time, and amongst the number was a man named Gregorio Mogni, who was almost generally known by the former name. Pellizzioni took his drink into the tap-room, and, though it is difficult to explain exactly what transpired, it would seem that a row started shortly after he had entered. The dispute was being conducted with a great deal of noise, and the landlord tried to get into his tap-room, with a view to quieting the furious disputants. Some of the Italians at first barred his entrance, but the Englishman's arm was at least as stalwart as any one of the foreigners, and at length he succeeded in forcing his way in. He then saw a man named Michael Harrington, a regular customer at the house, being carried into the bar-parlour, and he learned that the man had been stabbed in the fracas.

He went to him, and, raising his shirt, he discovered a serious wound, and, as it did not appear likely that the injured man had very long to live, he sent for a constable, who ordered Harrington's removal to the hospital.

In the meanwhile, Rebbeck, potman at the Golden Anchor, had also been stabbed. It appears that he noticed Pellizzioni forcing his way into the tap-room, and he followed him, saying, "Don't make any row here," whereupon the Italian stabbed him in the right side. Pellizzioni, according to the potman's testimony, ran at him a second time with the knife and inflicted a wound on the head. He then turned round and saw the infuriated Italian on the top of Harrington, to whose rescue he would have gone had he not at that moment become insensible. A policeman named Farvel was summoned to the house, and there he found Pellizzioni being held by two men, and he took him into custody. The deceased was then lying in a corner of the room, and the man he arrested was the only Italian present.

All this seemed clear and straightforward enough, and the prisoner, after two or three preliminary examinations, was committed for trial on a charge of murder. The case came before Baron Martin, at the Central Criminal Court early in February, 1865, in the mayoralty of Mr. Warren Hale. There was a second indictment against the prisoner, on which he was charged with wounding Alfred Rebbeck with intent to kill, and the accused pleaded "Not guilty" to both counts.

He was a typical low-class Italian, short, stiffly built, dark, and with thick lips and rather fine, brown eyes. He paid close attention to the evidence, and spoke English beautifully and with only a slight accent. Messrs. Hardinge Gifford and Besley conducted the prosecution on behalf of the Treasury, and the prisoner was defended by Messrs. Ribton and F. H. Lewis, who were instructed by Mr.—now Sir—George Lewis. Mr. Montagu Williams was asked by Mr. Fred Lewis to assist him in the defence, and readily consented to do so. A good many Italians were present in the crowded court, and the trial seemed to provoke more interest already than the circumstances of the case deserved. The landlord of the Golden Anchor was the first witness called on behalf of the Crown, and he told his plain, unvarnished tale in a manner indicative of truth. So, too, did Alfred Rebbeck, the potman, who stated that he saw the knife with which he had been stabbed by the prisoner, though he could not say what sort of a weapon it was. He had known Pellizzioni for four or five years, and there was no enmity between them.

A number of other witnesses were called to establish the fact that it was the prisoner who had used the knife so fatally. A man named Mellorship swore positively that the blow was struck by Pellizzioni, and that he saw no other Italian present at the time. This version of the affair was corroborated by other witnesses, who agreed that, though several of Pellizzioni's countrymen had been previously present, they were absent when the attack was made. Two or three of them stated, in addition, that they had assisted to drag the prisoner from the body of his unconscious victim.

The principal police testimony was that supplied by Thomas Ambrose Potter, an inspector of the G division, who deposed that he took the prisoner in a cab to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where Harrington, then being attended to

by Dr. Peerless, was lying. The inspector gave a graphic account of the interview between the deceased and his supposed murderer. Taking hold of the dying man's hand, he said, "Do you understand what I am saying to you?" Harrington feebly answered, "Yes." Inspector Potter then said, "In consequence of what the doctor tells me, I must inform you that you have but a short time to live." The deceased replied, "If I am to die, may the Lord have mercy upon me," and then he seemed to go off into a sort of doze. The inspector said that, with some effort, he succeeded in again arousing the fading attention of the dying man, whom he asked to glance round and see if he knew anyone of those about his bed. Harrington looked round and, pointing to the prisoner, said, "That is the man who did it," and he added something, which was either, "God bless him," or "God forgive him." At that time the witness was holding up the deceased's head, and Sergeant Baldock was taking down in writing what was said. The prisoner was shown

THE STRUGGLE ON THE FLOOR.

what had been written down, and he remarked, "I do not understand English writing." The witness explained to him that Harrington accused him of the deed, and he merely answered, "Oh!" The witness was very closely cross-examined by Mr. Ribton, with a view to weakening the effect of Harrington's dying statement on the jury, but he adhered to all that he had said.

The case for the prosecution terminated with the evidence of Dr. Peerless, the house-surgeon at "Bart's.," who had had the deceased under his charge since his admission at seven o'clock on the night of December 26. There was, said the doctor, an incised wound of about an inch and three-quarters in the abdomen, and four other wounds on the body. A great deal of hemorrhage ensued, and Harrington succumbed to his injuries at three o'clock on the following day. The witness added that the deceased was quite conscious and sensible when he made the dying declaration to Potter.

The defence tended to show that at the time when deceased was stabbed a regular free-fight was in progress, and that so far from only Pellizzioni being present—of the Italians—a number of foreigners were in the tap-room, greatly excited and armed with knives. Of these men, Gregorio was referred to as one of the most violent, and he was said to have struck out freely with his weapon. It was stated that the latter bore a remarkable resemblance to the prisoner, and it was at least a curious fact that since that night his old haunts had known him no more, and that he could not be found. A man named Cetti, himself an Italian, as his name implies, swore that, after the occurrence, Gregorio approached him with a knife in his hand, which he saw him throw into the public-house yard, and it was afterwards found in the lavatory there and handed to Inspector Potter. It is somewhat curious that the official in question made no mention of this fact in his evidence. A boy named Cowlands had given him the knife, and the inspector, being recalled, admitted that he had been handed one, and now produced it. Cowlands, however, denied that it was the same weapon. The judge summed up at great length, and it was at a late hour that the jury retired to consider their verdict. In spite of the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence, a short deliberation served to bring them to the conclusion that Pellizzioni was guilty, and he was condemned to death.

The verdict and sentence were most adversely criticised by the press and by public opinion, and created a great sensation in the highest quarters. The Italian Ambassador was compelled to take action, and Count Maffei, secretary to the Legation, had several interviews with the Home Secretary in regard to the case. The "Daily Telegraph" had a leading article of great power advocating the release of the prisoner, or, at least the postponement of the execution until Gregorio should be found. This argument at last prevailed, and Pellizzioni was respited. In a few days it was reported that Gregorio Mogni had been apprehended at Birmingham in consequence of a confession which he had made, and he was conveyed to London.

On Thursday, March 2, 1865, he was brought up for trial before Mr. Justice Byles, on a charge of feloniously killing and slaying Michael Harrington, and Mr. Sergeant Ballantyne, Mr. F. H. Lewis and Mr. Oppenheim conducted the case for the Crown. The jury was composed of six foreigners and six Englishmen. The prisoner refused to plead, but at last a plea of "Not guilty" was entered for him, and at

the request of the judge, Mr. "Monty" Williams consented to defend him, though he has recorded the fact that he was in no way prepared for this ordeal.

Mrs. Shaw, wife of the landlord of the Golden Anchor, now gave evidence and declared that as Harrington entered the tap-room she saw him seized by Gregorio, who attempted to strike him, but at that time the former managed to get away. Gregorio had before that struck her husband. The prisoner's brother deposed that on the night in question he and Gregorio were set upon by a party of Englishmen, who surrounded them, and the prisoner, appealing for help, cried, "Brother, they kill me!" He, Gregorio, then drew his knife and struck out right and left with it, but he could not say that he stabbed Harrington, though the latter was then in the room. A knife was then shown to the witness by the Clerk of the Court, which he swore was that he saw used by his brother.

A man named Pietro Maraggi also spoke as to seeing the

"That is the man who did it!"

accused with a knife in his hand, and he begged him, for God's sake, to put it away, the prisoner replying that if he did so they would never leave the room alive. Afterwards he said to witness, "I stabbed three or four. Good-bye. I'm going home."

Giovanni Sciena stated that he met Gregorio in Birmingham after the trial of Pellizzioni, and that he admitted that it was he who killed Harrington; but Mr. Williams, in cross-examination, induced the witness to allow that the prisoner might not have mentioned anyone specially as having been stabbed by him. Pellizzioni himself was now called, and his appearance in the witness box caused a great sensation. His evidence was to the effect that he was informed that there was a row at the Anchor between the English and Italians, and that he went there to quiet his two cousins, Gregorio, the present prisoner, and Giovanni, and get them away. Directly he entered the bagatelle-room he was knocked down, and then dragged to a corner and held there by two men till a policeman came and took him in charge. With regard to his visit to the hospital and the interview with the deceased, he did not understand what Harrington said. There was blood on his hands, but that came from his own hand, where he had been struck. The policeman took a small knife from his right trousers pocket, but he could swear that he had not used it to strike anybody.

Mr. Negretti, a partner in the well-known firm of Negretti and Zambra, stated that five or six days after the trial of Pellizzioni, whom he believed to be innocent, he went to Birmingham and found the prisoner in a carpenter's shop. He said, "You rascal! Is it possible you can't get into a fight without using a knife?" And Gregorio replied, "Mr. Negretti, you would have done the same if you had been in my place." The witness asked him if he was aware that his cousin was going to be hanged, and the prisoner said, "Is there no means to save him?" To which he replied, "Only by giving yourself up to justice." The prisoner reflected a little; then, saying, "Mr. Negretti, my cousin shan't be hanged for me," accompanied the witness to the station. On the way there he said, "I wish to tell you the whole truth. On the night of the murder I had been drinking a good deal of rum. We Italians were all treating each other, till I was the worse for liquor. Then there was a fight between the English and the Italians. I went to my brother's assistance. The fight took place in the bagatelle-room, and at that time my cousin Pellizzioni was not there."

Mr. Williams made the best defence he could for the prisoner, but the jury could not be convinced of his innocence in the face of his own admissions, and they found him guilty of manslaughter, recommending him to mercy on account of the provocation he had received. Gregorio was then sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

The Home Secretary for the present declined, in spite of this last trial, to release Pellizzioni; but at last it was decided to proceed with the indictment against him for attempting to murder Rebbeck, and on this charge he was accordingly tried on April 12-15, 1865, before two judges. The Crown was represented by Mr. Hardinge Gifford—then Q.C.—and Mr. Besley, while the defence was conducted by Sergeant Ballantine, Mr. Ribton, and Mr. F. H. Lewis.

Rebbeck was, of course, the principal witness, and he again swore that the prisoner was the man who stabbed him, and he also declared that he believed himself to be a dying man when the latter was brought to his bedside at the hospital. He glanced at the prisoner, and then said, "That is the man who did it," and Pellizzioni held his head away from him, and made no reply. The witness was keenly cross-examined, but nothing could shake his firm belief that it was the prisoner who stabbed him.

A man named Bannister was also wounded on the night in question. This man declared that he did not know who stabbed him, but he could swear that the prisoner was the only man in the room when Harrington and Rebbeck were injured. Other witnesses were called, and amongst them was Inspector Potter, who repeated his version of what transpired at Harrington's bedside, and added that he now believed the knife which was found to have belonged to Gregorio.

Sergeant Ballantine excelled himself in the science of cross-examination during this trial, and made a particularly brilliant speech for the defence. A more perplexing and confusing issue it is impossible to imagine; but I venture to think that the jury took the only possible way out of the difficulty in acquitting the prisoner, in view of Gregorio's confession and the evidence given at the latter's trial. A few days after the second trial of Pellizzioni, he received Her Majesty's most gracious pardon for the murder of Michael Harrington—which a jury said he had not committed—and was accordingly set at liberty.

Thus ended one of the most singular cases on record, and even now the true explanation of the mysterious affair is lacking. Which of these two Dromios was guilty? Did Gregorio sacrifice himself on the altar of consanguinity? Or did he confess to the stabbing to save the innocent Pellizzioni? It was then, and is now, impossible to say.

Not for Fashion's Sake.

LORD MANSFIELD once tried a prisoner at the Old Bailey for stealing the value of forty shillings, at that time a capital offence. The article stolen was a gold trinket, and the judge advised the jury to find that this was of less value than forty shillings, so that the prisoner might not incur the death penalty.

On hearing this, the prosecutor excitedly exclaimed, "Under forty shillings, my lord! Why, the fashion alone cost me more than double that sum!"

Lord Mansfield thereupon quietly remarked, "God forbid, gentlemen, that we should hang a man for fashion's sake!"

The jury did as directed, and Lord Mansfield sentenced him to two years' imprisonment.

THE CRUELTY OF SAMUEL HILLS.

He tortured a poor lunatic and killed him, but the jury sympathised with him.

"Why this would make a man of salt
To use his eyes for garden water pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust."
—SHAKESPEARE, "King Lear," Act IV., Sc. 6.

IT is only within comparatively recent years that the treatment of the insane has been freed from brutality. In the early part of last century those who were unfortunate enough to be committed to lunatic asylums were frequently chained up like animals or confined in filthy cages. No care was taken of their health, nor were they considered as deserving of even the most ordinary kindness. The keepers in the asylums were generally men selected for their physical strength and harsh natures, and the unhappy patients were completely at the mercy of bullies, who used to torment them for the pure love of inflicting pain on those who could not retaliate. There was no enforced inspection of places where the insane were confined, and, unless cases of inhumanity came under the direct notice of the medical superintendents of the asylums, the patients had no redress. Even then the doctors were far from satisfied that violence was not the best method of treating lunatics, and much horrible cruelty went on of which the general public never heard.

As a sample of the mode of treatment in one of the best homes of the period, look at the following case.

Moses James Barnes was adjudged to be insane, and was sent to Mr. Armstrong's Home at Peckham. Moses James was not a dangerous lunatic, nor was he mad, but he was what is called a monomaniac, being firmly convinced that his stomach was a water-butt, which was full, and, therefore, he was afraid to eat lest it should flow over. On all other subjects he was perfectly rational. He was, naturally, a stubborn man and very self-contained, and when he lost his reason he remained so. With the other patients he was regarded as a harmless creature, but a sulky one, and he never spoke unless first addressed.

On Christmas Eve, 1850, Barnes did not want to go to bed; in fact he announced that he would sit up for a time. Donelly, another patient in the same ward, who was a pleasant fellow when he did not think that the spirits were chattering to him, tried to persuade Moses James that it was time to rest, but Barnes was obdurate, so Donelly called Samuel Hill, the keeper of that ward. Hill came striding into the infirmary, and walked straight up to Barnes, gripped him firmly by the forearm with both hands and tripped him up, so that he fell heavily on the ground. A second time Hill threw him, on the last occasion falling on him with both his knees on his chest. Then he dealt Barnes several blows on the body, and told him that if he did not get into bed he would "give him some more."

Donelly noticed that Barnes's left arm hung limply down, and that the poor creature could not move it, and he pointed this out to Hill, who cheerfully remarked, "Help the lazy brute to get into bed yourself. He's only shamming." With that he gave the injured arm a twist, and left the infirmary.

On the next morning Barnes's shoulder was so swollen that he could not dress himself, and Hill stood by while one of the other patients clothed the victim of the keeper's brutality. For the next three days Barnes must have suffered untold agonies, but, like most lunatics, he did not complain. He could not move his left arm at all, and could barely walk. Then Hill began to get a little alarmed, for the poor fellow's shoulder was twice its normal size, and all colours of the rainbow, so he called another keeper to have a look at it, remarking that he could not think how it had happened.

Just then the medical superintendent came into the ward, and Hill had no time to hustle Barnes out of the way, as he had done on the previous days. Dr. Burton looked at Moses, and saw at once that the upper bone of the arm was broken, while serious injuries had also been inflicted by

He tripped him up.

moving the broken end. Barnes was put to bed, and a second doctor, Hill by name, summoned. Then it was that Barnes and Donelly told of the treatment which had been meted out by Samuel Hill, their keeper. Hill denied having touched Barnes, but other patients, who were quite sane enough to speak the truth, gave detailed accounts of their keeper's brutality. Everything possible was done for the wretched Barnes, but he was too severely injured to recover, and he died on the 2nd of January, 1851.

A post-mortem examination was held, and it was seen that the twisting of the arm, after it was broken, had caused extensive injuries to the soft parts in the armpit, and the broken bone was forced up almost to the shoulder joint. More than this, four ribs were fractured, and the lining membrane of the chest lacerated. Death was directly caused by Hill's brutality.

The outside doctor, Dr. Hill, communicated with the police, and the keeper was arrested, and in due time charged at the Old Bailey with killing Moses James Barnes.

The medical evidence went to show that the greatest violence must have been used, and that Hill could not fail

to have known from the beginning of the injury he had inflicted on the sufferer. Donelly was called and questioned as to his knowledge of the obligations of an oath and of his fitness to be sworn, and when it was found that, as long as the mention of spirits was avoided, he was perfectly rational, he was permitted to give evidence. He described how Hill had frequently tormented Barnes and struck him—indeed, the lunatic's body was bruised all over—and how, on the night of December 24, he had broken his arm and flung him on the ground twice. Hill, in his defence, declared that he had not touched Barnes at all, and had only noticed that he was not in perfect health when Dr. Burton first saw the deceased.

After this revolting story of cruelty the jury found Hill guilty of manslaughter, but, such was the feeling of the time, they recommended him to mercy because his victim was a lunatic! The judge concurred in this recommendation, and postponed sentence till the following session, when Hill was released on his own recognisances to come up for judgment if called on. To-day such an inhuman brute would be sent to penal servitude for a long term, but our forefathers thought that lunatics were not human beings, and so not entitled to protection!

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Tim Buckley.

THIS "undesirable" was a particularly bold and truculent specimen of the genus highwayman, and flourished exceedingly on the high roads of this country between the years 1695 and 1701. He was a native of Stamford, in the county of Rutland, and was in early life apprenticed to a shoemaker, but so tame an existence had no charms for him, and he removed to London with a couple of low associates and all the ready cash of his employer. His first exploit was to rob an alehouse at Wapping, from the landlord of which he stole forty pounds, three silver tankards, a silver watch, and three gold rings; but he consoled the unfortunate Boniface with a promise that he would come back and spend "some of the money at his own tavern"!

Tim Buckley had a penchant for stealing horses—when they were of any value—and when set up with a good "mount" he would take to the road and force anyone he met to stand and deliver. He possessed a rather pretty wit and a philosophic turn of mind; so that he was generally able to inflict some more or less pious reflections upon his unwilling "clients" what time he was transferring their portable property to his voluminous pockets.

At last he went to Leicestershire, broke into a house, seized eighty pounds, and purchased a very fast nag with the plunder. Better mounted than ever he had been, he became more daring than ever, and on the Derby road, near Lenton, he actually attacked a coach, in which were three gentlemen, with their two footmen in attendance. These five persons resented being despoiled by a solitary ruffian, and one of them discharged a blunderbuss, which brought the latter's horse to the ground. A most desperate conflict ensued, the valiant Tim boldly keeping up the struggle with his five opponents. He killed two of them, but after having received no less than eleven wounds he became faint with loss of blood and was made prisoner. He was speedily tried and condemned, and underwent the extreme sentence of the law in 1701, when only twenty-nine years of age.

His body was afterwards hung in chains very near the site of the present Lenton Church, then a thickly-wooded and secluded neighbourhood.

A Female Poisoner.

AN extraordinary murderess was Sarah Barber, who was tried for the offence of poisoning her husband at Eastwood, near Nottingham, in the March of 1851.

This amazon, who was only twenty-one at the time, and was six feet two inches in height, was in love with a young fellow, named Robert Ingram, a butcher by trade, and the undoubted motive for the crime was to enable her to carry on her intrigue with the latter and, perhaps, to marry him. Ingram stood beside her in the dock; but there was no evidence to connect him with the deed, and the jury, in his case, returned a verdict of "Not guilty," whereupon the woman turned round and energetically embraced him, to the no small amusement of those present in the court. The deceased had died from arsenical poisoning, and though she always declared her innocence, there can be no doubt that the deadly drug was administered by his inhuman spouse.

When the judge had pronounced sentence, this extraordinary woman remarked, "You have found me guilty in this world, but you cannot find me guilty in the next!" and throughout she manifested the greatest firmness. James Japhcote, of Attlebury, near Nuneaton, was engaged to execute this culprit, and he arrived at the gaol for that purpose attired in a drab, straight-down coat and green Scotch plaid waistcoat! He brought with him the identical rope which had hanged Mary Ball at Warwick in 1849, for murdering her husband by the administration of poison.

He was not allowed, however, to officiate on Sarah Barber. On Thursday morning, August 13, 1851, the governor of Nottingham Gaol received a communication from the Home Office, conveying the intimation that the convict was to be respited during Her Majesty's pleasure. When informed of the fact, the prisoner merely remarked that she was "very glad," and the sentence was ultimately commuted into transportation for life. The woman was sent to Australia, and when last heard of—in 1866—had obtained a ticket-of-leave, was married, and in comfortable circumstances.

A little doubt appears to have existed in the minds of the authorities at the time—for which the medical testimony was somewhat responsible—as to whether Barber actually died from poisoning, though it was certain that arsenic in minute quantities had been given to him.

A Mansfield Murder.

ON Saturday, March 12, 1842, John Jones, alias Samuel Moore, was tried at the County Hall, Nottingham, before Lord Abinger, for the murder of Mary Hallam, his sweetheart, who is said to have been a girl of good character and possessing considerable personal attractions. The crime was prompted by motives of jealousy, for which it does not appear that Jones had any real cause, and owing to the peculiar circumstances surrounding the case it excited a great amount of interest at the time. The prisoner was really fond of the girl, and he cried bitterly throughout the trial and manifested every possible indication of penitence. The deceased had been found with her throat cut in Jones's shop, and the latter made no attempt to deny or disguise the fact that he had killed her in a sudden inspiration of jealous fury. He was found guilty, and sentenced to death. On the morning of his execution he requested to be allowed to look at his own grave, and was immediately taken to a side yard, where the space which was to receive his remains was already dug. He threw into the grave a letter which had come for him that morning, and asked that it might be allowed to remain there and be interred with him.

Jones conducted himself with great firmness throughout the last dreadful preparations, and evinced a contrition for his deed which was assuredly sincere. The executioner was the eccentric Old Sam, of Appleby, and this functionary, at his request, pinned over his heart, as the procession to the scaffold was forming, a beautiful white camelia, which had been sent to him by Lady Lucy Smith, who had some knowledge of Jones's parents. The prisoner begged Old Sam to put him out of his misery as soon as he could; but he evinced no fear of death, and he made a brief and manly little speech to the huge crowd gathered outside the gaol. He did not seem to fall heavily, yet struggled very little. The throes of his body were, however, visible for several minutes after sensibility had ceased. He must have died hard, for he raised his leg, as if in pain, two or three times, and the blood was seen to gush from the nose and stain through the cap. Jones was dressed just the same as at the inquest and the trial—in a blue pilot surtout, with front pockets, velveteen trousers, and Blucher boots.

Replies to Queries

S. D.—Mrs. Dyson was brought from America.

CURIOUS.—The case you refer to will appear in a few weeks.

TOM NYE.—Yes; Thurtell was the "hero" of a Surrey melodrama.

R. J. TURNER.—William Corder was hanged in 1828 for the "Red Barn" crime.

JUST.—Catherine Hayes has appeared. Elizabeth Brownrigg will soon be described.

L. K. B.—No, it was for the murder of J. P. Cook by poisoning that Palmer, of Rugeley, was executed.

SUBSCRIBER.—The last execution for *attempted* murder was that of Martin Doyle, at Chester, August 27, 1861.

M. A. P.—The real name of the man known as the French "Jack the Ripper" was Joseph Philippe. He was executed in the middle of July, 1866.

PUNCH BALL (Sheffield).—We are always glad to hear from a regular subscriber, but we really cannot spare the time to give you the details you require otherwise than through the medium of these columns.

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